

**D  
E  
P**

DAIKAIJU  
PUBLISHING

KAIJU-FAN #9  
FALL 1998

**\$4.50**

\$5.50 Cdn.

# KAIJU FAN



## INSIDE:

- Reaction To Tristar's Godzilla
- The History Of Kamen Rider
- The Latest Collectibles From Japan



# INSIDE KAIJU-FAN™

The Magazine of Japanese Science Fiction & Fantasy

## FEATURES

TriStar Godzilla Reviews.....pg. 16

The first and the post-pass judgement on the most talked about film of the year. TriStar's Godzilla.

Masked Primer.....pg. 22

Tokusatsu television expert Roy Ware provides a beginner's guide to the history of Toei's *Kamen Rider* series.

Toho in America.....pg. 26

In this installment of our continuing feature, Brian Calves compares the differences between the Japanese and American versions of Toho's science fiction fantasy epic, *Mothra*.

Interview: Yoshio Tsuchiya.....pg. 38

In an exclusive interview, the veteran Toho sci-fi film star of *The Mysterians* and *Monster Zero* discusses his career.

Interview: Hideo Okamoto.....pg. 48

The designer of numerous Japanese sci-fi film and television characters provides insight into the world of creating kaiju.

G-CON '98 Photo Gallery.....pg. 56

Relive the fun (or see what you missed) with this 2-page photo spread of the year's best Japanese sci-fi convention!

Ultra-Mania Sweeps Japan!.....pg. 58

Take a trip to an Ultraman amusement park in Tokyo!

## COLUMNS

Kaiju News.....pg. 4

The latest news on upcoming productions from Japan including *Camera 3*, *Mothra 3*, *Ultraman G* and *Masked Angel Returns*!

Editorial.....pg. 8

Ultra Mail & Fan Art.....pg. 10

Product Reviews.....pg. 42

A critique of new products including Bender's *Godzilla Island* figures and *An Unnumbered Guide to Godzilla Collectibles*.

Kollectible Kaiju.....pg. 50

What's new and hot in the world of Japanese sci-fi collectibles.

Kaiju Bytes.....pg. 62

Aaron J. Smith reviews G-CON Online, the first Japanese sci-fi virtual convention!

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Freest Cover: Rich Cohen illustrates the huge match of the century as the alien Godzilla squares off against his American counterpart. Inside Freest Cover: A fantasy-like rendition of *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* by Eric N. Kallin. Inside Dark Covers: Contemporary Japanese sci-fi promotional art for (clockwise from top left) *Mothra 3*, *Masked Angel Returns*, the 1998 Ultraman Festival and *Palgauer*. Back Cover: Mark Nagata strikes again with a fantastic portrait of *Godzilla* and his fans.

For their contributions to this issue and for their continued support, the publisher wishes to express sincere thanks to: Leslie "Glee" Bridges, Robert Bunde, Jon Comella, Jan Cleveland, Cheryl Cohen, Boaz B. Calver, Norman England, Peter H. Gilmore, Yaela Haiman, Jeff Hines, Takahiko "Tiki" Miyagi, Erik Morris, Robin Okamoto, Jon Reikstein, Carol Roberts, Keith Sewell, Schiffer Publishing, Yoshitaka Shibata, Austin J. Smith, Geraldine Smith, Shouichi Takemura, Yoshio Tsuchiya, Roy Ware and Larry Whetop, as well as Rich Cohen and Mark Nagata for their superb artwork.

## KAIJU-FAN

Volume 3, Number 9  
Fall 1998

Publisher: John Recco Roberts

Kaiju-Fan is published quarterly by Darkluge Publishing, 890 East 14th Street, Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11230. Subscription price in the U.S. and Canada is \$15.00 (U.S.) per year (four issues, postage paid). Overseas subscriptions are \$25.00 payable in U.S. funds. For subscriptions, please make check or money order payable to "Darkluge Enterprises and Productions" and send to: 890 East 14th Street, Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

\* All written material, original photos and original artwork in KAIJU-FAN, unless otherwise noted, is copyright the publisher and respective author, photographer and/or artist and may not be reproduced by any means without the publisher's written consent. "G-CON" is a registered trademark

and "KAIJU-FAN," "ULTRA-FAN," "KAIJU-CON," "KAIJU NEWS," "KAIJU BYTES," "KOLLECTIBLE KAIJU" and "FANDOM ROADS" are all trademarks of Darkluge Enterprises and Productions, 890 East 14th Street, Suite 4B, Brooklyn, NY 11230.

Submissions of art, photographs and written materials are welcome, but can only be returned if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Art for publication must be in black ink. Prose should be typed or sent in as a 3½" IBM compatible disk as a Word Perfect, Microsoft Word or Microsoft Works file. All letters and e-mail received are assumed to be submitted for publication unless otherwise requested and may be edited for content.

Photos: pg. 4 (upper right) © HMI Data Co., pg. 5 (top & middle left) and middle back cover (top left) © 1998 Toho Co. Ltd., pg. 6 (top left) and middle back cover (middle right) © 1994 Tsuburaya Productions, pg. 6 (middle right) and middle back cover (top right) © 1998 Tsuburaya Productions, Lay Up and Rocco Planning Co., pg. 7 (top left & right) © 1997 Tsuburaya Productions, pg. 7 (bottom) © 1998 Globe International, pg. 16 (top) & pg. 17 (bottom) © 1998

Toho Co. Ltd. & Tsuburaya Productions, Inc., pg. 22-25 & pg. 44 (left) © 1997-1998 Toho Co., pg. 26 & pg. 28-31 (left) © 1997 Toho Co. Ltd., pg. 37 & 38 © Columbia Pictures, pg. 37 & 38 © Columbia TriStar Home Video, pg. 39-40 © 1997-1998 Toho Co. Ltd., pg. 48 (page) © 1998 Toho Co. Ltd., middle back cover (bottom left) © 1998 Nagata Tetsuo.

All characters remain the trademarked property of their respective creators and are used in this reference work solely for illustrative purposes.

For display advertisements, please write for rates. KAIJU-FAN assumes no responsibility for the authenticity of subscribers to sell transferred property.

**NEXT ISSUE:** Stay tuned for the next installment of "Toho in America" with coverage of *The Human Vapor* and *The Last War*. Plus, a lot of surprises are in store as Kaiju-Fan reaches its spectacular 10th issue!

© 1998 Darkluge Enterprises & Productions

# KAIJU NEWS

## GAMERA 3: NEW GYAOS REVEALED!

Director Shunji Kanaoka, screenwriter Kazuo Irie and special effects director Shuji Higuchi have once again joined forces for the production of *Gamera 3: Jarius Kikakari* (*Gamera 3: The Awakening of Irys*). This motion picture will mark the third and final collaboration on a Gamera film for the creative team that has been most responsible for elevating Dai's kaju star to new heights.

Sources reveal that the script is somewhat complicated, as it focuses more on the human characters and mankind's state of existence on Earth than it does with monsters. One source reported that while *Gamera 2* could be considered a serious sci-fi film with kaju, *G3* reads like a horror film with kaju.

Set in 1999, the story revolves the re-emergence of Gyaos as a result of the Earth's growing environmental instability. Now referred to as Hyper Gyaos, the monsters begin breeding all over Japan and are eventually confronted by Gamera in a battle that takes place in the Shibuya district of Tokyo. More powerful than ever, Gamera is able to easily defeat the Gyaos swarm with his finball weapon, but many innocent people are killed in the process as well. As a result of this, the Japanese government begins to develop countermeasures to deal with both monsters. In the mean-

time, a new threat is beginning to stir as the apocalyptic tale continues to unfold.

Many familiar faces from the previous Gamera films will be prominently featured in *Gamera 3*. Mayumi Nagasawa, the ornithologist from *Gamera: Guardian of the Universe* (1995) played by actress Shinobu Nakayama, is commissioned by the government to handle the new Gyaos threat. Although her role was somewhat limited in *Gamera 2*, Ayako Fujitani will return as Asagi Kusinaga, the young woman with psychic ties to Gamera. Also appearing in the film is Yukio Hatake, the nervous policeman from *Gamera: GOTU*, who briefly appeared in *G2* as a comical sight watchman. Hatake is best known to genre fans for his role as Kamrya in the *Zinran* films.

*Gamera 3* also introduces a new character, Ayana Hirasaka (played by newcomer Ai Maeda), whose parents were killed by Gamera in 1995. The young girl hates Gamera because of this and when she finds the egg of the new monster, Irys, she begins to care for the



baby creature upon its birth. In keeping with the popularity of the *Pocket Monsters* craze that has been engulfing Japan recently, the small monster at first appears to be cute and harmless, but appearances can be deceiving.

Later in the film, Gamera arrives in Kyoto to battle another swarm of Gyaos, but ultimately faces the final, full-grown form of Irys. Contrary to what has been reported elsewhere, the monster is not a mutated version of Gyaos, but rather an all-new kaju with psychic ties to the Ayana character. The creature is bold and colorful in design and has more in common with an anime monster than anything previously seen in a live-action kaju film. Other than mentioning its name in the film's title,

Dai is essentially keeping the monster under wraps until it gets closer to the film's release date. Suffice to say that like Legion in *G2*, Irys is an entirely new concept that has yet to be realized in a kaju movie.

The new monster villain has been created by V-Shop under the direction of Purito Shimada and Takuya Yamabe. A



(Left) A new, monster-looking Gamera awaits filming on the *G3* set. (Above) Testing out the full-size Hyper Gyaos puppet. (Right) Full-size puppets for both Gamera and Gyaos, the huge black mass in the background is the charred remains of Gyaos!

Photos by Jon Ciriello



full-size suit, as well as a puppet, assorted body parts and the monster's infant form have all been constructed for use the film. V-Shop also created BioRams, Godzilla's first Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah and the giant Legion from G2, among other movie monsters.

Tamoh Hanaguchi is responsible for creating the latest incarnations of both Gamera and Gyaos, just as he had done for Gamera: GOTTU. Hanaguchi also produced the Gamera sets for G2. For G3, only a full-size puppet of the new Gyaos has been created, which is primarily being utilized for close-ups. All other shots of the Gyaos swarms will be realized exclusively through computer graphics imaging (CGI).

The latest version of Gamera looks to be much meaner and fiercer than before, a further effort on the filmmakers' part to shed the character's "plant turtle" image and enter into the realm of a bona fide monster. This is an especially important point of Gamera is to be effective as the film's anti-hero.

*Gamera 3* is being produced by Dmer and is anticipated to be released in Japan in March of 1999. Stay tuned to *Kayo-Fan* for more in-depth coverage of the film, including a special Gamera issue in March.



A storage case on the set of *Gamera 3*. Could it contain the film's top-secret kajuf? Photo by Jim Cinescullo



Conceptual design of Young Ghidorah (top), the ancient monster that terrorizes the prehistoric past, and its present-day incarnation, Grand Ghidora (middle). (Above) Monster maker Shinichi Wakisaka of Monsters Inc. supervises his kajuf sets on the set of *Mothra 3*, as Inchedara prepare Grand Ghidora and Rainbow Mothra for filming. Photo by Jim Cinescullo

## MOTHRRA 3: A TAIL OF TWO GHIDORAS

As was first reported in *Kayo-Fan* last May, King Ghidora will challenge Mothra in the upcoming kajuf epic from Toho, *Mothra 3: King Ghidora Kaifu* (*Mothra 3: King Ghidora Attack*), to be released in Japan on December 12, 1998. The latest news from Japan is that the new film will feature not one King Ghidora but two, as Mothra must travel back in time to the Cretaceous period to battle an ancient incarnation of the three-headed monster dubbed "Young Ghidora."

The prehistoric Young Ghidora is the more dinosaur-like in appearance than previous versions of King Ghidoras, sporting reverse-jointed legs that are similar to those of a T-Rex (said to be inspired by TriStar's *Godzilla*) and a single, forked tail. In the story, Young Ghidora is said to be responsible for the extinction of the dinosaurs by feeding on the life-force of the smaller beasts. By attacking the three-headed foe in the prehistoric era, Mothra attempts to terminate the monster and erase the existence of its present-day counterpart.

In the Cretaceous period, Mothra is assumed by an armored Mothra larva, whose exterior is covered by a bumpy plating. Together, the two monsters are able to defeat Young Ghidora, although a portion of the monster's tail remains which ultimately reincarnates into the more powerful

erful Grand Ghidora in 1999.

Grand Ghidora is the stronger, modern-day version of the monster, similar in appearance to the original King Ghidora, but much fiercer looking. Instead of dinosaurs, Grand Ghidora will seek to feed upon the life-force of children, for which Mothra and the Alas, Moll and Lora (the good fairies from *Mothra* and *Mothra 2*), will team up to stop it. As usual, the Alas' effort will be opposed by their evil sister, Belvera, and her flying mechanical anti-dragon, Galgura III.

In order to combat Grand Ghidora, the new Mothra will undergo yet another metamorphosis into an armored form. The armored Mothra adult features a silver-plated, streamlined body with a face similar to the adult Batta. It is also rumored that a final version of Mothra will appear to defeat Grand Ghidora, although it has not yet been confirmed what it will be, one source reports that the final version will be the original Mothra!

*Mothra 3* stars Megumi Kobayashi, who will reprise her role as Moll from *Mothra* and *Mothra 2*, a new actress, Minako Kato, will assume the role of Lora. Also returning is Aki Hino as the film's villain, Belvera. The film will be directed by Chikara Yoshida (director of *Mothra*) from a script by Masaru Saitani (*Mothra* and *Mothra 2*). The film's special effects scenes will not be directed by Koichi Kawakita, who has since taken an executive position at Toho, former assistant effects director Kengo Suzuki will now assume that role.

Creature shop Monsters Inc., under the direction of Shinichi Wakisaka, will create the kajuf seen in *Mothra 3*, including all-new forms of Mothra and King Ghidoras, as well as a reimagined Rainbow Mothra that is much more realistic in appearance than before. The dinosaurs as seen in the prehistoric scenes will be realized via miniature puppets.



## ULTRAMAN GAIA LAUNCHES!

On September 5, 1996 Tsuburaya Productions launched the latest entry in a long legacy of science-fiction television, *Ultraman Gaia*, which marks the twentieth live-action Ultraman series to be produced by the company.

Separate from the universe depicted in *Ultraman Tiga* and *Ultraman Dyna*, the new series centers around the present-day establishment of the U.N. organization G.U.A.R.D. (Geocoentric Universal-alliance Against Radical Destruction). A division of G.U.A.R.D. is the defense organization XIG (pronounced SIG, an acronym for eXpanded Interceptive Guardians). XIG members command a wide variety of fighters and land vehicles dispatched via a large container carrier, similar in concept to Gerry Anderson's *Thunderbirds*. Also similar to Anderson's *Captain Scarlet* tele-series, the team's headquarters is located on a floating aerial base in Earth's atmosphere. XIG team member Gai Takayama recovers

the ability to change into Ultraman Gaia in order to defend mankind against monsters awakened by the alien C.O.V. In an interesting plot twist, however, Gai's friend, Haseya Fujimasa, recovers the ability to transform into Ultraman Agul, who defends the Earth, but not mankind. Agul's relationship to Gai is similar to Battar's relationship to Motoka in *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992), so the two characters are expected to be at odds with each other.

*Ultraman Gaia* is the first Japanese-made Ultrahero tele-series to feature a non-Japanese actor as a regular cast member. English-Philippine actress Maria Theresa Gow will play the role of XIG agent Georgia Leland.

In conjunction with the release of the new series, Tsuburaya Productions in Japan has also launched a brand new English version of their excellent website. Check it out today at <http://www.tsuburaya-prod.co.jp/english/index.html>.

## NEW MASKED HEROINE DEBUTS ON TOKYO TV

Tsuburaya Eizo, in conjunction with Lay Up and Farson, have introduced a brand new transforming heroine program to late-night television in the Tokyo area. *Kamen Tenshi Rosetta* (*Rosetta the Masked Angel*) debuted on the TV Tokyo channel on July 4, 1996. A

midnight program produced for the adult fans of classic tokusatsu television such as *Kamen Rider*, the program is serious-themed with horror overtones. The series is shot on video, but given a film-look process and televised in widescreen to appeal to fans of the genre.



A gallery of heroine characters from the set of *Rosetta* (from left) *Rosetta the Masked Angel*, *God Mask Pharaoh* and episode #9's female monster, *Oni-Yui* (the Ugly Witch). Photos by Joe Cocchiello

The story concerns a high school student, Anika (played by Rei Yoshii), who is given the power to transform into the super heroine Rosetta in order to battle evil bays (*strange beings*). Anika's father (played by Tetsuya Ushio of *Loon Mars* fame) is also able to transform into the legendary hero, *God Mask Pharaoh*. Both characters have been styled with an ancient Egyptian flavor, even the same Rosetta is inspired by the Rosetta Stone, an Egyptian monument. Battling against the duo are a bizarre assortment of creatures such as an anti-woman dominatrix and a lily-witch.

*Rosetta* is scheduled to run for one season (13 episodes), at which point it will be evaluated for renewal. As the producers are trying to gain interest from adult genre fans, many veteran tokusatsu actors and actresses, such as Yuriko Hoshino who appears in episodes #7-9, will make guest appearances.



TO  
USA KAIJU FANS.

カイトセフ

ANNE

C  
1  
3  
'98.7.25.



A Letter from Anne: Actress Yuriko Hishimi, who starred as Anne Yamamoto in *Godzilla vs. Gigan*, sends her best wishes to Kaiju-Fan readers with this special autograph. Stay tuned for our interview with Ms. Hishimi in the upcoming Kaiju-Fan special issue. Photo by Jim Chiodini

# GODZILLA vs. GLOBE!

In the August 4, 1998 edition of *Globe*, a weekly tabloid newspaper that primarily caters to reporting gossip in celebrity circles, a news story reports that Haruo Nakagima, the actor who played Godzilla from 1954 through 1972, is now "a penniless senior citizen who lives in a state-supported nursing home."

"Obviously, the article is not accurate," said John Roberts of Daikaiji Enterprises and Productions, "but what else do you expect from such a publication?" "Any American fan who has attended G-CON in the past three years and met Mr. Nakagima in person will attest to the fact that he is very strong and active for his age," he continued. "He is clearly not some meek, penniless, little old man who is waiting away in a nursing home as the *Globe* is misrepresenting

so readers in order to sell papers."

Additionally, many other points in the report are erroneous. "The article states that Nakagima 'attended the New York City premiere' of TriStar's *Godzilla*," said Roberts, "when in fact he was with us in Chicago on the opening day." Roberts's company sponsored the actor's visit to America for the third year in a row to attend G-CON, a Japanese sci-fi fan convention. "Basically, they have taken things that Nakagima has said completely out of context," said Roberts, "and instead of

writing a decent article about the man, [*Globe*] decided to fabricate an angle in order to capitalize on all the recent *Godzilla* hype. A 'measly' \$150 per day? Do they have any idea how much that was worth in 1954? Nakagima worked for Toho Co. steadily for decades!"

The *Globe* staff could not be reached for comment. The weekly tabloid is edited in Florida and published by parent company, *Globe International*, in Canada. When informed of this, Roberts commented, "Comed! Why am I not surprised? After all, this isn't the first time that entirely bogus info concerning *Godzilla* has come from Canada," he



## GODZILLA STAR LIVING IN POVERTY

Did you know that the actor who played Godzilla for 18 years is now a penniless senior citizen who lives in a state-supported nursing home?

Obviously, the article is not accurate, but what else do you expect from such a publication? Any American fan who has attended G-CON in the past three years and met Mr. Nakagima in person will attest to the fact that he is very strong and active for his age.

The article is not accurate, but what else do you expect from such a publication? Any American fan who has attended G-CON in the past three years and met Mr. Nakagima in person will attest to the fact that he is very strong and active for his age.

Obviously, the article is not accurate, but what else do you expect from such a publication? Any American fan who has attended G-CON in the past three years and met Mr. Nakagima in person will attest to the fact that he is very strong and active for his age.



# EDITORIAL

Now that G-CON is over and things have settled down (more or less) here at Linkage Enterprises and Productions, there are so many different things going on that I hardly know where to begin. But first and foremost, both Carol and I would like to personally thank everyone who worked so hard and pulled together to make G-CON '98 the best Japanese sci-fi convention of the year. Our thanks must especially go out to Robert Moore, who acted as the go-between for DEAP and just about every Chicago-based company associated with the convention. Rob spent many hours of his personal time to arrange for the Randhurst Mall appearance of the Japanese guests, track down a video projection system for the convention and arrange for the theater and bus service for the Friday night Toho Godzilla film screening, as well as take the Japanese guests around to just about every place they wanted to go during the course of their stay in Chicago. Thanks, Rob, for putting up with my constant asking, "Could you find out if..." The same goes for Larry Wauchop, who also acted as our legman, checking out several theaters at which to possibly hold the screening and tracking down the rental computer that was used for the Thursday night Sci-Fi Channel Internet chat with Ken Satozawa and Haruo Nakajima. Everyone who enjoyed G-CON '98 owes both Rob and Larry a debt of gratitude.

Then there are the folks who came to the convention as paying attendees, but wound up working just as hard as any of the "staff" did. Todd Taum, Kevin McHenry and (once again) Larry Wauchop all helped out at the registration desk, giving Carol and I the much-needed freedom to ensure that the rest of the convention was running smoothly. Dennis Lancaster, who did such a wonderful job entertaining the attendees at the Friday night screening and during the Saturday morning registration by sipping around in his superb kaju costumes; Rob Smith, who provided security for the convention, just as he has done for the last three years; John Novarra, who filled in as guest host for several of the panel discussions; Gertrude Smith, who spent more than half the convention running the Internet Room, ensuring that the convention was fully

covered on the World Wide Web; Aaron J. Smith, who set up G-CON's Internet hookup, promoted the show on his excellent Godzilla News website, set up a G-CON Online website and arranged for Internet sponsors and the Sci-Fi Channel chat with the guests, even though he was unable to attend the convention himself; John Woodard, KALU-FAN cover artist, who allowed us to display his wonderful artwork; Sue Victor for monitoring the Kaju Kids—Coloring Contest for us on Saturday; and Jay Johnson and the Southern Rock All-

Rock Martin at Expressions in Animation for providing Ultraman videos and pressbooks as prizes and the Suncoast Motion Picture Company for hosting the Randhurst Mall autograph session with the special guests.

And finally, we also want to thank Yoshikazu Shibata, Shigeko Kajima, Lennell "Ultra" Bridges, Keith Sewell, Brian Culver, Robert Smith, Mark Suggs, David Miner, all the costume, model and alien contest entrants, Sanko Gensho and everyone at Euro G-CON for making this the first truly international convention and all the people that I've forgotten to mention here. Without your constant support, there would never have been a G-CON to begin with! And a very special thanks to my wife, Carol, who traveled to Chicago a week early to set up for the guests, which allowed me the time that I needed to continue my teaching and avoid stacking my classes with a substitute for a week. I truly could not do any of this without her—thank you, sweetheart, I love you. Thanks to everyone for once again proving that the true meaning behind G-CON is the ideal of "for the fans, by the fans."

Now, onto the business at hand. The first and most obvious change is the addition of color to KALU-FAN's inside front and back covers and the expansion of our page count to 68 pages beginning with this issue! This is only the first in a number of steps as we constantly strive to improve KALU-FAN with each issue.

Secondly, while I am happy to report that G-CON '98 was a complete success, the time has come for Carol and I to re-evaluate our convention strategy. I have always made it a point to be completely honest with the fans both at the conventions and in the pages of KALU-FAN and not embellish the facts about any of our projects. The truth of the matter is that while about 650 people attended this year's show (nothing to sneeze at, for sure), it is a far cry from the 1,200 people who attended the 1996 convention and still well below the 800-900 fans who attended last year's G-CON in New York. What this means is that the attendance figures simply no longer justify our expense of holding the conventions in Chicago and the time has come to move G-CON closer to home, therefore, G-CON '99, will be held in the New York City area next year. And while we will miss the friends that we've made in Chicago, keeping the show in New York will allow us to save on our own travel expenses and put the money towards improving the



Stars for providing us with free entertainment during the Saturday night Costume Party.

In addition, we would also like to thank our sponsors, who provided us the support that any convention requires in order to be a success. Jim Camanella and Cheryl Cohen at Club Daikaju, for their constant support and help in keeping DEAP running (don't worry, guys, we still love ya, no matter what they say on all movies monster!). Barry Kaufman at House of Monsters, who provided all our press releases; Edwin at Kaju Productions/Media Blasters for allowing us to screen Gappa, The Trogliathan Monsters and for providing free Gappa video tapes as contest prizes; Pat Wiles at Senior Entertainment for providing two complete sets of Godzilla videos as prizes; Alice Allison at Random House for providing copies of *The Official Godzilla Compendium* as prizes for the Kaju Kids—Coloring Contest; A D Visions Films for providing free *Destroy All Monsters* posters as giveaways,



convention considerably. For all the fuss in the Midwest and on the West Coast, instead of simply bringing a good convention to you, we are endeavoring to create a great convention that will truly be worth travelling to. While it is too early to decide exactly which way any of this will go, our number one goal is always that we provide you the best possible product for your money.

Finally, and probably the most important, is that the lawsuit between Toho Company Limited and Gary Tucker and me has finally been settled and I'm happy to be able to report that we're very pleased with the outcome. Two years, three months and tens of thousands of dollars later, Toho had finally decided that it was best to cut their losses and settle the entire matter, especially after seeing how eager we were to proceed to a jury trial. While it was impossible for either side to walk away completely clear from giving up anything, the settlement that was ultimately reached was fair and very favorable to us. Toho received \$2,500 over five installment payments and the assurance that we would never screen any Godzilla film without informing them of our intentions first—something we always agreed to do in the first place, but were usually ignored. In turn, we received the right to sub-license any Godzilla film offered for screening from film libraries, in addition to the right to screen any Toho film in public domain. Upon the licensing of such films, Toho is to be informed of the screening, at which point they have 15 days to send any objections. If no notice is received within that

time, then the screenings may legally continue as scheduled. If Toho decides to object, they must do so in a certified letter and state their reasons for objecting. Upon receiving such a rejection, we have the right to appeal to a federal court, who will have final decision on whether or not the screening is permissible. If the court rules in our favor, Toho is responsible to cover all legal fees and court expenses. This is a substantial point for us, as we have always strived to compensate our intentions to Toho, only to be ignored. Under the settlement, Toho must now act responsibly and take our future requests seriously; if they ignore us, we legally have the right to screen the films that we're asked to license.

In addition, the settlement finds no fault with either Toho or us, therefore clearing Gary Tucker, Vaughtn Films International and myself from any copyright infringement. This last part is especially important because this prevents Toho from contacting any sub-licensees who are interested in doing business with us and claiming that we're just a bunch of "copyright infringers."

In the end, of course, the real winners are the attorneys, both Toho's and our own. While our expenses are nothing compared to those that Toho incurred (they hired the largest intellectual properties law firm in America to pursue this suit), the case has taken two years of our lives, strained the relationship between Gary Tucker and me and ultimately led to our falling out with J.D. Lees and G-FAN, which has been covered far too many times in these pages. However, despite all these problems, I

would do it again in a minute (and by that, I mean stand up for our rights). I do not believe in simply giving up one's personal rights and freedoms just because some corporation is too backward to realize that fan-based organizations are the heart and soul of their livelihood (a fact Toho quickly discovered as they watched TriStar's Godzilla quickly bounce down the box-office charts). What Toho had hoped to accomplish with their lawsuit was the end of G-fandom in North America, as they initially thought they were bringing down G-FAN, Club Dokuja, Video Dokuja and the rest all in one shot. When they learned that they had instead sued a full-time college student who was training to become a high school social studies teacher, their pride and personal ego would not let them drop the matter and both they and the fandom ultimately suffered for it. But now that it's over, it is time for us to return to the "business" of being fans. While we will still not request any "official sanctioning" from Toho (because as I said before, we simply do not need it), we will continue to improve KAIRU-FAN, G-CON and KAIRU-CON to insure that each and every one of you receives the best possible product for his or her money.

Well, I've babbling on long enough. Until the next issue, I ask that you remember just one thing: size doesn't matter, ability and actions do!

John Reece Roberts  
Publisher  
August 1st, 1998

COMING IN OCTOBER 1998!

# T.V. & MOVIE-FAN™

The new, quarterly newsletter by editor, creator and publisher Lenell "Ultra" Bridges which explores the world of television and movies from the good ol' days of the 1950s to the present.

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FIRST ACTION-PACKED ISSUE:

- **The Filmmaking Files:** An ongoing series covering the cartoons and live-action shows of one of America's great animation studios
- **Interview with Kathy Coleman** who played Holly Marshall from the 70's Saturday morning series "The Land of the Lost"
- **Sea Hunt:** A tribute to the late Lloyd Bridges
- **The Dukes of Hazzard Series Episode Guide**
- **Space Ghost: The Hero and Legend**
- **The Forgotten Star Trek: A Look at the Animated Series**
- **Plus:** Movie Reviews, Classifieds, Artwork, Magazine Plugs, coverage of G-CON and G-FEST and more!

T.V. & Movie-Fan #1 will be issued free of charge to subscribers. Just send your name and address to:  
**T.V. & MOVIE FAN 5304 SO. BISHOP CHICAGO, IL 60609-5832**

**Note:** T.V. & Movie-Fan will cover all aspects of television and movies except for Japanese science fiction and fantasy, the reason being that there are magazines such as KAIRU-FAN which already cover that genre. T.V. & Movie-Fan is a trademark of Silvermist Productions and is not affiliated with KAIRU-FAN magazine, which is a trademark of Dokuja Enterprises and Productions.

# ULTRA MAIL

Send Letters To:  
**Daikajin Publishing**  
890 East 14th Street, Suite 4B  
Brooklyn, NY 11230

Dear KALU-FAN,

At the innocent age of two, I saw something on TV that changed me forever. The movie was *Godzilla vs. Gigan* and as I grew up, I simply couldn't get enough of *Godzilla*, *Gaia*, *Ultraman* and everything that had to do with Japanese cinema!

I hope it's not too much trouble if you can answer these questions:

- 1.) When the *TroStar* *Godzilla* film has come and gone, will Toho be nice and find a distributor for the *Heisei* *Godzilla* movies?
- 2.) When will Trendmasters' Camera toys be out?
- 3.) I thought *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* was a decent entry—it has a great musical score to it. Why wasn't it well received?
- 4.) I missed out on *Mothra 2*, what's its underwater plot about?
- 5.) Please give info on the 1998 live-action *8-Head* movie. How well did it do in Japan?
- 6.) I'm a huge *Ultraman* fan! Why won't they bring him back like *Ultraseven*?

Well, I guess I wrote enough for a first-time letter. Long live KALU-FAN! Shooweeh!!

Your #1 fan in Arizona,  
David Silliman  
Phoenix, AZ

P.S. How do I get a copy of *Age of the Gedi*?

David, to answer your questions as best we can:

1.) Toho has currently licensed the first four films in the *Heisei* *Godzilla* series for release on home video in the US. *Godzilla 1985* from Anchor Bay, *Godzilla vs. Biollante* from HBO Home Video, *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* and *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (now re-named *Godzilla* and *Mothra: The Battle For Earth*) from Columbia TriStar Home Video. Masaharu Ima of Toho's L.A. office has stated that the rights to the remaining *Heisei* films have also been licensed to TriStar, a has been rumored that the last three films will be released in time for Christmas. 2.) It is being reported on Trendmasters' website (<http://www.trendmasters.com>) that their Camera figure series will be available in retail stores and direct from the company via Internet mail order this fall. See this issue's "Collectible

*Kagu*" for more info. 3.) *Godzilla vs. SpaceGodzilla* had a weak, yet complicated story and uninspirational special effects; in addition, the enemy monster itself came across as more of a slight annoyance than an actual threat. For these reasons, the film hasn't been very well received by fans, especially when you consider that it followed the most popular entry of the *Heisei* series, *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. 4.) The underwater plot of *Mothra 2: Shallowdown Beneath the Sea* concerns the emergence of an ancient sea monster, *Dagahra*, as well as a mysterious temple from the ancient civilization of *Nerei Kamei* which holds the secret to defeating the monster. A full review and plot outline will appear in a future KALU-FAN article on the *Mothra* film trilogy. 5.) We will hopefully get around to providing coverage on the live-action 8-Head movie in a future issue, too, so keep reading! 6.) The original *Ultraman* did return in a recent episode of *Ultraman Tiga*. For a complete synopsis of the story, go to our website at <http://terra.surflink.net/~kandi>. Also look for the *Ultraman* T-pose guide that we'll be running in our 1999 special issue (see the advertisement in this issue for more info). Finally, *Age of the Gedi* is still available for purchase; in order, just check out the G-Store ad on the back of this issue. -JRA

Dear John,

I talked to Robert Modica (Creative Features) the other day and he informed me that G-CON was yet another great show. Wish I could have been there. If I could only get out of finals at my local city college. Maybe next year. I couldn't agree with you more, as your editorial stressed, that no matter if *TroStar's* "G" is good or bad, it will have little or no effect on our great hobby. Since *TroStar's* "G" is a turkey (something I know it would be two years ago when *TroStar* hired those Devlin & Emmerich boozes—I'm not psychic, just a good judge of filmmaking and craftsmanship), we can brush it off and hope Toho gets back to making the *Godzilla* films once again! Maybe they'll have the smart to hire the *Gamera* team (Kamekiri/Haguchi) to bring something fresh and innovative to the Big "G." We can only hope.

Sincerely,  
Brent Elbert

P.S. I know it's really none of my business, but I hope you will put the J.D. Lee break-up to rest. Of course, I don't know all the details, but I'm sure that with the great success of your conventions and KALU-FAN,

there is definitely room for two of everything in *Kalja* fandom. Maybe there will never be a reconciliation between you both (of course, maybe neither of you want one), but at least the hobby can go on and forget it. If anything, we should all be getting together to bash *TroStar's* "G." Anyway, all the best.

Currently Toho has no plans to revive their *Godzilla* series until the monster's 35th anniversary—at least that was the story back in early June, according to our sources in Japan. That may very well change now that the *TroStar* film has failed to meet box-office expectations, it all depend on how the film ultimately does internationally and whether or not *TroStar* plans to go ahead with a US repaid.

As far as the "G-CON Wars" (as they have been called) between J.D. Lee and me are concerned, I personally consider the matter closed. Only if J.D. continues to post false statements about our conventions or take credit for previous conventions that he had nothing to do with then I feel that I must comment in order to clear up any confusion. Of course, we will continue to give G-FAN's convention coverage in the pages of KALU-FAN, even though J.D. has personally informed people that he wishes we would ignore his convention and not mention it in these pages. At KALU-FAN, however, we believe that the best way to serve the fans is by giving them as much information as possible. -JRA

Dear John

Sorry I missed G-CON. I broke a tooth and couldn't make it in time. Anyway, please send me info on a new issue if one is available and keep me on your mailing list. I've heard rumors you guys are on an irregular posting run, which is kind of preventing me and others to subscribe. If you have any info about this rumor, please let me know. I still haven't heard from the Markable gang since I sent my cash in years ago and they were supposed to refund everyone's money. Thanks.

Vince Cornelius  
Colchester, OH

First off, Vince, I hope that everything went well with your tooth and that you're feeling better. Secondly, let me assure you that KALU-FAN will be around for a long time, even if it means printing the magazine for only one person—me! KALU-FAN is a labor of love for all those involved, as a result, the magazine is never going to have to stop being published simply because of the "bottom line." It's only been in the last year, since we began publishing the magazine independently of G-FAN, that KALU-FAN has gotten down to a regular printing schedule. But rest as-

sured, we will never solicit subscription money from anyone if we know we're going to close our doors, and in the worst case, we'll continue to produce our KAUU-NEWS newsletter to compensate. Don't worry, despite the hopes and dreams of several individuals, KAUU-FAN ain't going nowhere—except up! -JRR

Dear KAUU-FAN,

G-CON was such a blast. This was my first time at one of these conventions. I couldn't believe the dealers room. All the activities and meetings were great, too. Meeting the guests and getting their autographs was so exciting. Then, dancing with Mr. Touchy—wow! The Controller dances Spanish flamenco very well. There were a few people that got pictures of that. Please write me if you have a copy. I didn't have a camera that day.

You guys are doing a great job with your mag, which I just found out about, too. In issue #6, the back cover had a very beautiful painting of Godzilla vs. Destroyah, but the artist didn't get any credit. Someone told me at the convention that it was Mark Jones. Mark, if you read this, please write me, I'd

love to talk about your art. Please publish this so I can get in touch with these people. More Kaiju Kids on the way. Keep up the good work. Can't wait for the next G-CON!

Rossana GARCIA (J.K. a Destroyah)  
15012 Avenue Broyanna  
Lutz, FL 33549

Thanks for the kind words, Rossana, and for sending in your artwork for publication. I'm pleased that you had such a great time at G-CON and are enjoying the magazine. We did forget to credit Mark Jones for his fantastic Destroyah artwork that graced the back cover of issue #6, but we made up for the omission by crediting him in issue #7.

I missed most of Mr. Touchy's dancing, except for when he twirled his coat and broke the light fixture in the lobby! I was not able to take any photographs at this point, so if any readers out there have copies that they would like to share, please send them to us and we'll gladly pass them on to Rossana. -JRR

Dear John

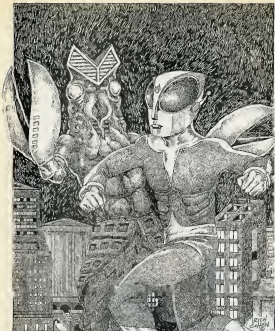
I hope things are going well since the con-

vention. That was quite a weekend! If you do not recall, I was the man in the "Kingejs" Godzilla suit at the costume contest. I left you with my name and address. I realize that you are a busy man with far more than your share of responsibility, but I'm afraid I must ask for your assistance on at least two things.

The first is rather a substantial request. While I am aware that you are not directly connected to the entertainment industry, I hoped that you might be able to put me in touch with someone who could help me make use of my talents. In addition to costumes and other prosthetics, I am also skilled in two dimensional art, particularly comic art and design. I believe I would be proficient at conceptual art and storyboarding. I also write fictional stories, as well as scripts. In fact, I have several scripts currently in development. I know that Guy Tucker and Ed Goddard-Smith are involved in writing and that a number of other talented club members have had the opportunity to use their skills to their advantage. If you could offer me any assistance toward finding an outlet for my efforts, I would be greatly in your debt. I am especially interested in becoming involved with minor video or motion picture projects. Since my

Peter H. Gilmore





*I do say so myself, and would be more than happy to send a copy to you. Just give me a little time to get organized. Thanks! JRR*

Hi, John

No doubt at the moment you're barely catching your breath from G-CON, but I just wanted to drop you a note after receiving issue #8. I wish I could've been there with all of you, but as I explained to Lenell Bridges, my wedding plans have to take first priority. Damn! It's also a double whammy, as by August 29th I should be on my honeymoon in Honolulu. At least I can try to find Hawaiian dub of Ultraman on video. The magazine is looking better and better (I don't say that in a self-serving way) and is solidifying its own identity apart from the "ghost" of G-FAN. As I mentioned in my previous letter, *KALU-FAN* is in a great position to really enlighten the American sci-fi fan to what Japanese fantasy really has to offer. As far as the (Tristar Godzilla) movie is concerned, Lenell and I agree as far as what has ultimately been done to the true integrity of the character, but on the upside, the heightened awareness of who Godzilla is, and more importantly, was, could be very positive in the end. This past weekend (I know you missed it, obviously)

work largely revolves around keeps of one kind or another, I believe that would be the most appropriate area to apply all of my skills.

My second request is a bit more reasonable. Most of my pictures from the convention did not turn out and I was unable to videotape it. If you could please put me in touch with someone who has taped footage of the costume contest, I'd be very grateful. Thank you.

Jim Thompson  
Highland, IL

*You are correct, Jim, in that assuming that our contacts in the American entertainment world are very limited (especially when compared to our contacts in Japan) You see,*

*Hollywood views our organization as an unprofessional group of fanboys, not worth taking seriously (unless they need something, then it). And while a readership of roughly 2,000 is nothing compared to the number of people which read Time or Newsweek, we are the only organization, after all, that is able to hold Japanese sci-fi conventions featuring celebrity guests from Japan. But the pros in Hollywood know better, after all, just look at Tristar's Godzilla.*

*Anyhow, Art's work is extremely good (as his European and EuroGest acts will demonstrate) and if any of our readers can help him out here, please contact us and we'll pass the info along. As for as video of the costume contest goes, I took some very good footage of*

WPIX ran Godzilla movies continuously over two days. While I was sitting with some of my co-workers in the lounge, I discovered some covert Godzilla films I never knew existed. Happily, I can tell you I've lost videos from the Heinn sentis (out to three of my peers). Hope you liked the Godzilla/Ultraman tear-up I did for Lenell. He deserves a lot of credit for the concept and as always, for being a truly dedicated fan of the genre. He's also inspired me to find an opening theme for my newswire magazine: cops, gets check with the wife. I was afraid I was sending too much material for the magazine—everybody should have an opportunity to see their hard work! However, I am glad to see it being put to use. Much continued success and good health.

*Richard, please don't feel that you're sending in too much material for KALU-FAN. The magazine depends on dedicated people like you to keep it going. Remember...for the fans, by the fans! I'm pleased that you like the direction we're heading in with the magazine and we hope to improve the look with each issue. You may notice that we've gone to color on the inside front and back covers and that we have also expanded to 68 pages. That gives us a lot more room for artwork, so keep it coming!*

*Overall, I find that the fallout from the Tristar film has hardly had any effect on the course of this fandom and that things should be returning to normal by the time you are reading this. The only thing is to see if Toho will now return to making Godzilla films before their official date of 2004, which will mark the 30th anniversary of their most famous character. I guess we'll just have to wait and hope. Thanks for everything, hope to see you at KALU-CON. -JRR*

Dear KALU-FAN guys,

I just finished reading issue #7 and once again, I'm impressed. Real good stuff, although I would like to see more articles and episode guides on the various Ultra series and other superhero shows. But the reason I'm writing is to throw my two cents in on this Tristar Godzilla controversy. I've always been a huge fan of horror, sci-fi and fantasy, but I firmly believe that Hollywood has turned out very few genre films in the last twenty years that are worth watching. *Independence Day* only made me wish I was watching *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* and *Jurassic Park* had me itching to pop a *Barbarian* flick in my VCR. So, this Hollywood Godzilla holds almost no interest for me and I really doubt I'll even see it until it shows up on Channel 11 some night when there's nothing else on. However, there is one thing that really bothers me about this: that no one else seems to have brought up. I have no doubt the movie will be financially successful in the States. The smart, long-running ad campaigns has almost guaranteed hefty box office for the opening weekend. But what happens if the movie is an incredible success in Japan? What if it outgrosses all of Toho's recent offerings? What if children all over Japan are playing with little plastic Deuszillas? What if the Toho big boss says, "Look, the public likes the American Godzilla better than our Godzilla. From now on, Godzilla must only look like this igneous thing that runs fast and has very strong lungs that blows down buildings." What if Godzilla is DESTROYED really is the last true Godzilla flick? "GASH!"

Admittedly, this is not a likely scenario. Godzilla has become such a large part of Japanese culture that the changes of the Japanese public accepting Deuszillas are about as likely as the American public accepting the late Toshuro Mifune as Mr. Spock. Keep up the good work.

Rob Billers  
Flerrington, NJ

P.S. Now that I think about it, Mifune probably would have done a pretty good job as Mr. Spock.

You've brought up many good points in your letter, Rob, so much so that I decided to answer this letter first, despite it being one of the last ones that I typed in. Of course, now that the Tristar Godzilla film did not do as expected at the box office (at this writing it had made only 115 million), I'm sure that by the time this issue hits the newsstands it will be little more than a bad memory. But let's look at some of your points about how the film will do in Japan. First off, the 60 million dollars that Tristar had paid for the rights to produce Godzilla has already made Toho more money than any of their domestically-produced Godzilla films. But how will the Japanese public respond to the film? Based on the reaction from the few Japanese folks who have already seen the film, I will guess not very well at all (if correct, the film will have been released in Japan for least six weeks by the time you read this). I can sure that the Japanese public will go to see the film out of curiosity, mostly to see what Hollywood has done to their icon. But I doubt that many will go back again and again, just as American audiences did not return for a second showing. Several years ago, I predicted exactly what would happen during the opening week of the Godzilla film. Although I love the genre of Japanese sci-fi, I never fooled myself into believing that the general public in America will ever look upon Deuszilla as anything more than John Belushi in a cartoony Deuszilla suit wearing ABC's presentation of Deuszilla vs. Megalon. Updating the character was a bad idea from the start and hopefully, it has taught Hollywood that just because you throw large sums of money into a film's special effects, if the story stinks, nobody's gonna wanna see it!

And just as a side note, after Carol and I first watched IDA, I turned to her and asked if she would like to see a better version of the same movie. I then got out my tape of the original War of the Worlds and was truly in sci-fi heaven. -JRR

Dear John and other kaga fans:

How are you? Hope things are going well. I've really enjoyed the recent issues of KALU-

FAN. The articles and photos of the '97 G-CONs were really good. And I also liked the articles on Japanese TV shows. I really enjoyed your G-CON '97. The dealers rooms were filled with so much to pick from. I was especially glad there were videos for sale. One big disappointment at JD's convention was that there were hardly any videos for sale. To be fair, I really enjoyed JD's con, too. I thought the two Chicago G-CONs were about equal. However, I enjoyed being in the Wyndham Hotel much more than being in the Radisson. I wondered if you and some other fans besides me might feel we have "outgrown" the Radisson and want to move to a bigger hotel with a lot more function rooms. I'm familiar with so many suburban Chicago hotels since I've gone to so many different science fiction cons. Or maybe most fans feel that close proximity to Yachan Plaza is really important and would want to stay with the Radisson. This could be interesting to ask in a survey. I'll be looking forward to future issues of KALU-FAN and will be renewing my subscription. And I'm really looking forward to attending G-CON '98.

Kathy Concoran

Thanks for the kind words and advice, Kathy, and I hope that you enjoyed G-CON '98. I'm sure you will agree that this year we really used the Radisson's meeting space to its fullest potential, and believe me, there's still plenty more we could do with it. However, you bring up two good points that I wish to address. First, while attendance at this year's show was good (about 650 people, the same amount as the 1995 convention), it was nowhere near the 1,200 people we had in 1996 and the 800-900 people we had in New York last year. So maybe the problem is not that we've outgrown the Radisson, but that we've outgrown Chicago for the time being. This is why we've decided to hold G-CON '99 in New York next year and possibly return to Chicago for a future show. As far as using the Wyndham or a similar hotel when we return to the Chicago, while the Wyndham is very impressive, it is not practical for a convention such as G-CON. The meeting rooms are too spread out and the intimacy one gets from having the entire hotel to ourselves would be lost. Just for the record, this year's convention booked over half the rooms in the Radisson for the weekend, which means that the Radisson was "our" hotel for the weekend; we didn't have to share it with a wedding, seminar or other such functions. Therefore, when we eventually return G-CON to Chicago, it will most likely be at the Radisson.

In regards to the selling of video tapes (whether it be in the convention's dealers room or out of the hotel rooms), Toho has always maintained that the importing of any of

their *Hundred Goals* from Japan was an "illegal" act, J.D. *does* can tell you that they originally wanted us to ban all Japanese import products from G-COM '93 (at this point we were still working together). The point that Toho constantly seems to forget is that the importing of tape, CD, video tapes, etc is NOT an illegal act, especially when Japanese sales tax, shipping tax, and American customs taxes have all been paid. As for the dignity of video tapes, all dealers at G-COM and KALU-COM sign agreements which clearly state that their merchandise is authentic. If Toho for any company, for that matter has a problem with what a dealer is selling, then it is their responsibility to take the matter up with the dealer in question, not with our conventions. We are simply not going to "police" or "legitimate" our conventions, especially when you consider that there isn't a sci-fi convention in America where the dealers do not sell video tapes. -JRB

Dear Mr. Roberto

My name is Ronnie Burton. We've never met, but I've long admired your writings. The reason I'm writing is to request info about KALU-FAN magazine. In the subscription list \$10.00. I tried unsuccessfully to get in touch with you by phone day and night and in both cases, all I got was the recorded message. I'd like very much to contribute info to KALU-FAN, such as comprehensive cast and credit listings for the Toho science fiction movies, if your readers would be interested.

Some time ago, I sent such info to G-FAN, but had I known the direction G-FAN was going to take, I might have had second thoughts. I'm very disenchanted with G-FAN and I'm also very sorry for all the trouble you guys have had with Toho. For what it's worth, G-FAN was much more enjoyable back in the days when you and Mr. Borshi were writing such great articles like the "Godzilla in America" series. Take care and I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,  
Ronnie Burton

First off, Ronnie, please call me John. All this "Mr. Roberto" stuff makes me feel like I'm standing in front of my class making social studies (which also makes me feel old).

I'm pleased that you appreciate mine and Robert's work and if you are interested, please check out our website at <http://home.norfolk.net/~tombu> for the latest installment of "Godzilla in America". As for our time working as associate editors and regular contributors for G-FAN, both Robert and I look back at those days as some of the happiest and most prolific of our involvement in this fandom. But despite the interfer-

ence from Toho Co. Ltd., we realize that our partnership with J.D. *does* would have most likely come to an end anyway. Robert, myself and especially long-time associate Jim Cervoni were eager to expand to all areas of Japanese science fiction, while J.D. was content to stay where he was covering only Godzilla.

In regards to contributing to KALU-FAN, please feel free to submit anything you wish in fact, I'm begging for it! If you'd like suggestions regarding the type of articles that we are looking for, please contact myself or Jim C. as soon as possible. KALU-FAN is only as strong as the people who support it and we never want to get to the point where the "average fan" feels that he can not contribute because the "experts" have it all wrapped up. Remember, KALU-FAN is a magazine "for the fans, by the fans," so send us anything you wish and help shape KALU-FAN into the magazine that you'd like it to be. (Oh yeah, and the yearly subscription rate is now \$15.00.) Thanks! -JRB

Dear Chikago Enterprises,

I really enjoy your KALU-FAN magazine. As a long-time reader of both G-FAN and KALU-FAN, I was wondering when you were going to run a readers poll. To date, the magazine has been out three years now, but you have yet to let the readers have a say or give an opinion. Please consider running a poll in the near future. Thank you.

Carlos Mendez  
Union City, NJ

Carlos, we already give the readers of KALU-FAN a chance to voice their opinions on every issue's letters section. Just keep writing and we'll be sure that your voice is heard. But as far as reader polls go, I personally have never liked them or treated the information reported on them, especially when you're not given the response-to-reader ratio for the poll. For example, let's say that we ran a poll asking readers which were more important at conventions: having Japanese guests or screening Toho films. Suppose we then reported that 80% of the respondents said that screening Toho films was more important than having Japanese guests. What did that really tell you? If KALU-FAN is read by 2,000 people, but only 200 respond to the poll, then does the poll truly reflect the opinions of the magazine's readership? Here's another example: if G-COM is advertised in 1,000 people, but only 1,000 actually show up at the convention, does that mean that the other 1,000 fans do not want conventions? This is why we stay away from running reader polls here, we could make cute charts and fancy diagrams to fill the pages of KALU-FAN, but

we'd rather fill our pages with worthwhile articles like "Toho in America" or "Collectible Eggs" -JRB

Dear John

Thanks for passing along that G-FAN subscription request from David Hoffman. I was just saying to Ruth yesterday how I envied you that your show would soon be over and you could enjoy your summer without having to prepare for it or worry about it. Believe it or not, I do wish you well with G-COM. In thinking about it, I doubt there are many individuals who understand the risk (or stress) of staging conventions on their own (i.e. not on behalf of some corporation or large group). I guess that makes us members of a pretty exclusive "club." Good luck.

J.D. Lezi  
G-FAN magazine

J.D., believe it or not, I also wish you well with your convention, which is why we will continue to cater it in the pages of KALU-FAN. Regardless of our personal differences, it's important to the fans, then it's important to me. -JRB

Dear John and crew

First off, let me tell you that I really enjoy your magazine. I have been with it there 40 and plan to continue for as long as you continue to publish it. However, I wanted to let you know that I feel let down concerning one of the articles in KALU-FAN # 5.

To tell you something about myself, I have been a big-time GODZILLA fan for over 20 years. I have a serious collection of books and toys, both imported and domestic, so I have what I would like to think of as an informed opinion. I am also a West Coast Godzilla fan who does not want to reveal the name of money it would take to get to one of the Chicago or New York shows (come to Los Angeles sometime). Because of this, the "G-Con War" stuff does not affect me and I try to avoid it as much as possible. I have dealt with G-FAN, KALU-FAN, Club Chicago, Video Chicago and others and I have not one bad thing to say about any of them. I love everybody. Which brings me to the point of my little rant here.

I was reading your editorial in #8 where you stated, "I hope that everyone can return to the 'business' of enjoying this hobby again." You also replied at one point in the letters section that, "It will be our policy to remain neutral in all aspects of this fandom." I thought to myself, "Yeah, all right! Enough with the venom (sure that for Devo) and let's get back to the fun stuff." THEN, later on, I got to your printed review of The Official Godzilla Compendium.

Now don't get me wrong - I didn't like the book all that much either. In fact, I believe that I was the first person to post in the all movie monster newsgroup that the book wasn't that great. But come on, the review by "Chad Neuring" was not a review at all. It was a chance to take a swing at J.D. Lees and you took it. I mean really, does this have to go on for FOUR pages? In my post, I stated that the writing style was kind of weak and a few other things and that was it. Was it really necessary to point out EVERY SINGLE error that you could catch? I could FEEL the hate as I read each word. I also question the conclusion—"It is difficult to recommend *The Official Godzilla Compendium*." Are you sure? I already had many great Godzilla books (such as *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Godzilla*, *The Platinum Book of Godzilla 1 & 2*, the *Special Graphics* magazines, Stuart Galt's books, etc.) and I found enough in J.D.'s book to consider it worthy of 16 books. Hell, it's far and away better than Marmora's piece of s\*\*\*.

My point is this: if you want to keep your problems with J.D. out in the public, then cool—it's your right and your magazine. But if you state that you want to use shovels and remain neutral and objective, then by all means DO it. If you set the example, then maybe all of this will finally go away and we CAN get back to the hobby we all love. One can hope.

Thanks for listening,  
Bruce Sassman

Bruce, as I ultimately edited the *Official Godzilla Compendium* review which was submitted to us by "Chad Neuring," I felt that I should respond to your letter.

First of all, I can understand your frustration at reading anything in KAIRU-FAN that appears to be keeping alive the recent negativity in fandom. However, I don't agree with you that the compendium review was "not a review at all." It is a very detailed and well-researched review, just not a favorable one. Please understand that it was very difficult for us to decide how we should handle this article. Random House has always been a big KAIRU-FAN supporter and Marc Cerasini is considered to be a good friend to most of the folks behind this magazine. But when you consider that this was the first U.S. Godzilla compendium to be officially sanctioned by Toho, it is inconceivable that such a work could contain so much erroneous information. Comparing it to Marmora's unlicensed trashy just doesn't cut it—this book was sanctioned by Toho themselves! In this regard, we ultimately decided that KAIRU-FAN should print the truth, just as we have always strived to do in the past. To us, the review that was submitted by "Chad Neuring" is the truth, however unpopular that viewpoint may be. It was also clearly stated at the beginning of the review

that those of us behind KAIRU-FAN will take responsibility for printing it, even if the author does not wish to be acknowledged.

While I agree with you that the review was rather lengthy, every error was not mentioned, believe it or not, the review was actually much longer than what you saw printed! I did my best to keep in only the points that I felt supported its criticisms and thus, warranted its length. However, I personally feel that two pages or so would have been enough to get the point across had I written it myself.

Besides taking author J.D. Lees to task for his writing ability (or lack thereof) as demonstrated in the compendium, the main point of the review was that Toho so obviously had the heads of those involved who were just trying to do a good job, including the folks at Random House and J.D. Lees himself. For a company that keeps a high profile about the unlicensed books that they've been able to keep off the market through legal action, it

seems that Toho is doing the best job they can to insure that such a market continues to exist by propagating misinformation in authorized books like the Random House compendium. In this respect, someone who is as knowledgeable about this genre as the publisher of G-FAN or should have been much more critical of Toho's position on the book which he has put his name in. As evidenced in his own magazine, Lees has printed extremely critical reviews of other genre books that didn't contain a fraction of the errors that his own book did.

There is, however, a much bigger picture behind our analysis of *The Official Godzilla Compendium* than just taking swipes at J.D. Lees and I feel that we would have let readers down had we not printed a truthful review of the book. If Kairu-Fan printed misinformation about the genre, I certainly wouldn't expect anyone to buy it, in this regard, the fans

Continued on page 63



# REVIEWS OF TRISTAR'S GODZILLA

## THE FANDOM ROARS AS THE BOX OFFICE PLUNGES



The votes are in and it would appear that Tristar's *Godzilla* has audiences fleeing fleeing from the theater, that is! Yet the destruction caused by the monster's runaway rampage in New York City pales in comparison to the debris and rubble left in the wake of the heated debates over this film on the Internet, in fanzines and within fan circles. Whether you love *Godzilla* or love to hate it, there's no denying that one of the most anticipated of all *Godzilla* films has now become the most talked about as well. Here's what *Playboys*, both fan and professional, on both sides of the Pacific had to say about it.

### Good Monster, Bad Movie

Review by John Rocco Roberto

Like most of the productions released by the Hollywood dream factories these days, the over-reliance on special effects and the belief that one has to dazzle the audience rather than entertain them has once again gotten in the way of good filmmaking and outweighed the all-too-important need for a good story and good acting. Tristar's *Godzilla* fails not because it is nothing like a *Godzilla* movie, but because taken simply as a "monster movie," it is not a good film to begin with. Even if the production had featured the original *Godzilla* as we know and love him, it would still have been hard to find any redeeming values about the film. In fact, the creature itself comes off as a very interesting and workable design, it just happens to be stuck in a bad movie. But where the movie really falls apart is both in the quality of the acting and consistency of the storyline.

The acting in *Godzilla* is below par, even for Matthew Broderick who delivers his lines in a deadpan style, devoid of any hint of emotion. The same, unfortunately, can be said for the other actors as well, some of whom have given fine performances in past features, but seem to fall short when asked to enrage for this film. Could it be possible that director Roland Emmerich was counting on the special effects to carry this film and decided that he did not need to get the most from his actors? The style of the film itself, with all the action framed in five center



Tristar's updated-for-the-90s *Godzilla*: Is it simply a good monster stuck in a bad movie or could the new design be considered the film's fatal flaw?

of the screen, suggests that Emmerich was more inclined to shoot a television movie than a widescreen, major motion picture. This problem becomes glaringly apparent if you've picked up one of those "shot-off-the-screen" video copies that have been retailing on New York City street corners since the film opened in theaters. Even with the video framed to film the center of the screen, no action is lost on the sides, it's as if the film had been shot with pan-and-scan in mind.

The opening scene with the Japanese fishing boat and the footage of the American fishing trawlers being pulled under by *Godzilla* is one of the best-executed scenes in the film,

reflecting the suspense and mood of the original 1954 film, *Gojira*. So are the scenes in Madison Square Garden, despite the obvious "lifting" of plot elements from *Jurassic Park*. These scenes are both suspenseful and whimsical, making them fun to watch, the problem is, however, that soon afterward one has to remind oneself that he or she is watching a *Godzilla* movie and thus, the entire premise falls apart. So does the scene when *Godzilla* re-emerges from the rubble of the destroyed Madison Square Garden, (the monster's scale is as so out of proportion that one wonders how he fit in the arena to lay the eggs in the first place. Unfortunately, the film suffers from

each plot problems from the very beginning, so the entire premise of the story is hard to believe.

First, we are asked to accept the fact that French A-Bomb testing (as illustrated by stock footage of American H-Bomb tests during the opening credits) in the 1960s mutated a lizard into *Godzilla*. It could not have been after that time because above ground test were banned in the 1970s. What about all the American A-Bomb tests? We did our fair share, too; what happened to



*"It's very good, but it's not Godzilla. The actors' performances, especially their reaction shots to the creature, are very nice. Japanese audiences will enjoy this movie; they enjoyed Jurassic Park, so they will enjoy Godzilla."*

- Yoshio Tsuchiya, veteran actor who appeared in numerous Toho science-fiction films and in films directed by Akira Kurosawa



"our" islands? Why weren't they mutated as well? We are then asked to believe that not only do the French know about the mutation, but that they also believe they can single-handedly destroy the creature. If Godzilla took 30 years to mutate (assuming that it was a slow mutation over several generations,) then how would the French know about it in the first place? And if they first discovered it when Godzilla attacked the Japanese fishing ship, then why would the French assume that it was caused by their experiments and not by American or Soviet experiments conducted in the same area? It is plot holes such as these which weaken the entire story and cause the film as a whole to lose credibility.

There are several other flaws, which I will list here briefly:

- The only survivor from the Japanese fishing boat identifies Godzilla as the creature that destroyed his ship after looking at Jean Russo's cigarette lighter. Why? Godzilla does not have atomic breath, so why would the flame trigger the sailor's memory?

- The sailor, as well as all early Godzilla encounter sites, is teeming with radiation, yet when Godzilla reaches New York, the radiation aspect of the story disappears and is never mentioned again. What happened? Did Godzilla suddenly learn to decontaminate himself before arriving in the Big Apple?

- Godzilla, a cold-blooded creature from a tropical zone, migrates to New York (a temperate zone) in November to lay eggs. The problem here is that not only would a tropical creature NOT migrate to a temperate zone, but the cold weather and constant rain would make it sluggish and quite easy to pick off while dining on fish in front of the Flat Iron Building.

- It is impossible to completely evacuate the City of New York's 8 million (not 3 million) residents. I know...I live here. I've driven during rush hour! Trust me, it can't be done.

- Godzilla is chasing the sole surviving attack helicopter through the streets of New York, so why doesn't the pilot pull up? Did he forget that helicopters could fly upward and thus, escape the rampaging monster?

- The Park Avenue Tunnel that Nick and the gang drove their stolen taxi into to escape Godzilla does NOT lead off Manhattan Island and in fact, connects East 33rd Street and East 41st Street, traveling under



- Haruo Nakajima, actor who portrayed Godzilla from 1954 to 1972

*"The opening of this film will do quite well, but several days later, there will be the attack of the critics!"*

Park Avenue (hence the name "Park Avenue Tunnel"). Why was it blocked? Since Godzilla can already tunnel under the city streets, blocking this tunnel makes no sense.

- The closest suspension bridge to the Park Avenue Tunnel is the Williamsburg Bridge, followed by the Manhattan and Brooklyn Bridges respectively. So why lead Godzilla to the Brooklyn Bridge? (And yes, I realize that the 59th Street Bridge [as seen during the opening credits of *Taxi*] is closest to the tunnel, but that's more a girder bridge than a suspension bridge.)

While some of these points can be looked upon as nitpicking, they do divert from the overall believability of the story which causes the entire film to suffer. Unfortunately, I have my fears that *Continuities* will make another film in the series, remember that TriStar signed on for a trilogy. Will this sequel correct the mistakes that the first film makes? Based on the reaction that Dean Cain has had to the film's critics, I'm afraid that his

own arrogance will lead him to make the next movie just like this one, if nothing more than to say, "See, I told you that my Godzilla is better!"

## TriStar's Godzilla is Better Than Nothing

Review by Peter H. Gilmore

I wish I could have liked G '98 more than I finally did, particularly as a movie in general, the build-up sequences are well handled, but they really don't pay off with the massive trashing of New York City that I would have liked and expected. David Arnold's main title score is excellent, specifically his low brass motif based on the rhythm of the word "Gojira," and it complements well the dusty visuals that set up the scenario of mankind abusing the beasts with whom we share this planet (the apes seem like accessory witnesses to Man's nuclear misdeeds). Unfortunately, a majority of the rest of the music is buried under sound effects.

For me, the real problem with this film is the human actors who kept sapping the strengths of the whole product (except for Jean Reno and Mark Aron). This can be blamed on the screenwriting, the main characters didn't really engage my sympathy and since none died, they never really seemed to much danger, thus no tension was generated.

Amateurizing Godzilla (making him an animal rather than walking nuclear death) was expected, especially since this film really went back to the progenitor of giant apocalyptic films, *The Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*, even as far as to include a French flavor to the proceedings (recall the French-speaking Dr. Nesbit from *Beast*). It really reminded me of the approach taken with Hammer's *Horror of Dracula*, as opposed to the Universal original, wherein the Count's supernatural powers were diminished, but his athleticism was exaggerated in an attempt to make him more believable for contemporary audiences.

Tatopoulou's designs were nice over, though I initially hated the first Fruit of the Loom designs when they were leaked to the Internet. The detailing of Godzilla is amazing and beautiful, though I would have made him stockier, made his fin array larger, and made certain that his fin breath was used regularly. This could be easily done if they were to give the new



"His tail. Didn't you know that the Williamsburg Bridge would have been a lot quicker? You guys can't really be from New York!"

Godzilla the electrical discharge abilities that in turn is some rule and other real-life creatures. This electricity could ignite the methane power breath, just picture the beast preparing for a blast as electricity crackles and arcs along his backplates in a wave, finally converging around his head as he exhales, igniting the breath into a wall of flame. While the *Batzilla* scene was too clearly based on the *Jurassic Park* Raptor sequence, I liked the design of these creatures as well, leagues beyond anything that Toho has done when creating Godzilla's offspring.

I liked, too, that that Godzilla seemed to be a learning animal, although I would have liked him to have learned sooner that mankind was an enemy who lived in New York's buildings and to have seen him go on a rampage to wipe out people, not simply chase a torn job bearing the handful of folks who appeared to be responsible for the death of the progeny. He treated buildings simply like rocks and mountains, passing by or over them, I'd prefer that he smash them!

There has been much chattering of the flaws in this film, but I think the special effects were quite extraordinary, giving us the first truly convincing kaji as he interacted with the city architecture, vehicles and people. The moving camera shots which included Godzilla were brilliantly done, though not every effects shot was of exemplary execution. I think there should have been more full-body shots of Godzilla, seeing him run from the cover from a little distance would have been magnificent, as well as seeing him crash through the old Pan Am building (rather than just shoving us the hole afterward). I think they ended up wasting money and time on effects techniques that didn't pan out: the giant mechanical Godzilla (which is seen briefly shaking the FBI truck in its mouth), the whale monster capture for the CGE which was dropped, etc. These things were explanations and dead ends that



- Kenpachiro Satsuma, actor who portrayed Godzilla from 1984 to 1995

"No comment."

prevented time and money being spent on what does work. This should be corrected in a sequel; they now know how to do convincing kaji effects, so they can go for what will work and expand that envelope.

I enjoyed the film despite the flaws I have seen it three times, but would like to see this new animal form of Godzilla in a better film, played off against a worthy kaji adversary (a reborn King Ghidorah would do nicely, something I've wanted to see ever since I saw *Dragonstayer*). The cartoon series looks to be promising. And I want to see what impact this will have on Toho, are they find an approach to revive Godzilla that will be fresh, but still true to their darker, original Godzilla tradition which influenced the Heian series? All that I see say is that more Godzilla is far better than nothing new happening and it gives us plenty to debate as well!

## America Ruins Another Japanese Icon

Review by Lesell "Ultra" Bridges

Since 1953, when it was first announced that an American film company would produce a Godzilla film, fans had hoped that the

movie would expand the genre of Japanese sci-fi & fantasy with the general public. The wait is now over and the first "American" Godzilla film has been released. In the beginning, I was against this film because of past moments of American companies kicking up popular Japanese stars as evidenced by the outdated *Power Rangers*, *Rig And Battle Force*, *Masked Rider* and the dull, slow-moving *Ultraman*. *The Ultimate Hero*. However, I decided to wait to see the film and give it a chance before I passed any judgment on it. As the old saying goes, "Look first before you decide."

Well, after seeing it, I can now say that TriStar Pictures, Cinepolis and especially Roland Emmerich and Dean Devlin, the two men behind this film, have failed in their efforts. TriStar's Godzilla was a big disappointment in this fan. It's filled with so many flaws that it's not even a good monster film. Godzilla has had a very powerful legacy for over 44 years which has worked very well for him and for his fans. So how do you screw that up and betray a legacy? By spending over 150 million dollars on advertising and slick special effects and forgetting to invest any money in a good script or respect and listen to the fans, that's how! On a scale of one to ten stars, I give TriStar's Godzilla a rating of one star. This film is in my opinion the worst bastardization of any Japanese icon that I have ever seen. Fans have waited five agonizing years for this film, but have simply gotten the short end of the stick!

For starters, the movie had an assembly of good and bad cast members. Matthew Broderick had some of the worst lines ever and didn't seem to connect with the audience at all, especially when he was performing stupid tasks that didn't make any sense, like buying a whole stock of home pregnancy test kits on a whim. He seemed to be sorely misused. Maria Puffillo also gets a "thumbs down." Not being the greatest actress to begin with, in my opinion, her character comes off as

## The TriStar Godzilla Film: A box office success?

by Jim Cleveland

The TriStar Godzilla film's start in U.S. theaters is coming to a close. At this juncture, we can begin to intelligently analyze the movie's performance at the box office. So far, the film has grossed far more dollars than any Godzilla film in history. At the end of the first weekend in August, the beast had gobbled up \$135 million at the American box office and just over \$100 million in the international market. The film appears to be on a

pace to finish near the \$200-250 million dollar mark in gross receipts, as the majority of additional earnings will be realized from foreign box offices.

Taken at face value, Godzilla appears to be a solid box office success? Is it really? How much profit will the studio actually see from the theatrical release? Is this movie a box-office winner? Let's look at some of the numbers more closely and we may find the answer.

One way of evaluating the success of a film is in its staying power at the box office. Can it make money steadily over a period of time? Obviously, the first week of any major film release will most likely be the best week fi-

nancially. With Godzilla '98, that is abundantly true. The movie made \$74 million during its first week in U.S. theaters, a figure that represents fully 55% of the movie's domestic gross to date. Not only that, but in both domestic and international markets, Godzilla has typically lost revenue at a rate of 50% or higher per week. In Japan, for example, the movie dropped more than 70% in attendance in the second week.

What do these numbers tell us? Essentially, Godzilla brings 'em in, but can't hold onto 'em! The movie suffers chronically and in virtually every location from a death of repeat business. Simply put, Godzilla's theatrical run will most likely be over before

ally and weak, especially when she lets her boss, Carran, completely take advantage of her. Only at the very end of the film does her character ever stand up to him and by that time, you don't really care anymore. Of the entire cast, only Hank Azaria as the gang-bro TV cameraman "Animal" and Jean Reno as the cool French spy impersonating an insurance man manage to deliver any decent acting and some of the better lines of dialogue. Reno, in my opinion, saves the film from being a total wipeout because he takes his role very seriously. However, for all the sore points I have with the casting, there are two supporting cast members who I think were put into the movie mainly because Mr. Eismann and Mr. Devlin are not very fond of movie critics Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel

(both of whom gave their *IDA* a thumbs down review).

The story is certainly right out of many old, 1950s B-movies (most of which I highly love). To begin with, Devlin and Eismann should have stuck to the original script that was written for the first director, Jan Dülloft. Instead we are treated to a confusing mess of a story which has no plot and drops the entire movie like a rock. People could no doubt tell that the whole story was a rip-off of over a dozen past and present popular films, especially *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, *King Kong*, *Jaws*, *Park* and *20 Million Miles to Earth*, just to name a few. Put all of this together and it comes out as a dry and dead story that doesn't move or flow and is very, very boring. Plus, throughout the entire film, it is con-

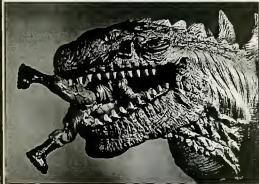
stantly raring with no change whatsoever in the weather.

The musical soundtrack to the film was decent, but it was a distract combination of *J.T.*-like melodies, with some rock 'n' roll thrown in during the end credits. There were some nice symphonic tracks, especially during military scenes and the Apache chapter battle against "Dezuzilla."

The special effects in the film are nice, especially the scenes of destruction and people fleeing. Eismann and the SFX team did do a very good job with the CGI sequences, which were very well-blended. However, if they had had the "real" Godzilla in the film, the effects would've gone up to excellent. Sadly, as we can all see, the "real" Big G is nowhere to be found. Instead, there is a

"dinosaur" with strange plate-like fins on his back that walks upright like the T-Rex in the first *Jaws* movie. This is the fatal flaw of the entire film and the worst possible insult to the legend of Godzilla. Devlin and Eismann no doubt didn't want the "cheesy, lumbering" Godzilla, with whom people are most familiar since his birth in 1954, in their film. Instead, they've created their "own" supposed version of Godzilla for the 1990s.

Even if this new Godzilla looks more like a dinosaur than a monster, there are scenes in the film that had me and the audience cheering him on. Especially after outmaneuvering and escaping the Apache choppers, the pilots of the choppers think they have finished him off when the dinosaur suddenly bushwhacks them from behind and takes his revenge! Another good scene is when the dinosaur makes a giant leap over a military blockade and escapes into the Shadow River. This scene is



Now this is a scene that should have been in the actual movie!

movies like *Lost in Space*, which began its run weeks before the TriStar film.

But even if the movie is floundering at theaters, the \$270 million gross will still make money for Sony, right? Maybe. It depends on which numbers you believe. First, how much of that \$270 million actually goes to Sony? In March of 1998, it was reported that Sony was demanding an unheard of 80/20% deal on ticket revenues for Godzilla. Sony wanted 80% of the revenues for the first week of release, then 70% for the weeks following. Theater owners rejected this unrealistic demand and according to Sony, the actual figures were "nowhere in the middle." So let's assume that Sony col-

lected on average 60% from each dollar of ticket sales for Godzilla '98. So, do we use \$270 million as the starting figure? Unfortunately, the answer is no.

As part of the deal to obtain the rights to Godzilla from Toho Studios in Japan, Sony agreed to let Toho keep all revenues from screenings in Japan. Now, as I had said before, Godzilla fared even faster in Japan than in the US dropping 70% after the first week. Still, the movie made over \$10 million in its first two weeks in Japan. Even at a conservative estimate, we should still subtract \$15 million from the gross revenue of \$270 million. This debit should account for Toho's piece of the pie.

Now, if we take 60% of \$255 million, Sony collects \$153 million dollars in gross revenues for Godzilla '98. Still, a tidy sum indeed—until we begin to subtract Sony's overhead, that is. A number of figures for the movie's cost have been suggested in the media, one of the more common figures that I have seen is \$120 million. Still, that does not include the cost of marketing the film, for which I have read estimates ranging from \$35-\$60 million. Let's take a conservative figure: \$40 million in overhead for marketing. This brings the total production cost for Godzilla to \$160 million. \$153 million in gross revenue less \$160 million in production costs already leaves the film \$7 million in the

one of the only fine points in the film, and when the Navy submarines ultimately engage the dinosaur, the scene is very suspenseful. The dinosaur swimming with grace and stealth is a new idea that had never been done in the old G-series. Devlin and Emmerich at least get my vote only on this point.

They do not, however, get my vote on the "babydillos." This part of the story is surely taken right out of the Velociraptor scene in *Jurassic Park* and was a total waste of time, money and film.

In the final conclusion, TriStar's *Godzilla* is a giant, painful step backwards for the Japanese sci-fi genre. While I must admit that it has made the general public much more aware of the genre (as in more merchandise in the U.S. market, for example), I know that the film could have done so much more if the character had been handled with total respect. Emmerich, Devlin, TriStar, the fans and of course, our icon, *Godzilla*, had a golden opportunity here and it was sorely missed. Why would TriStar spend over \$10 million per year to obtain the rights for *Godzilla* from Toho, \$150 million on production and another \$160 million on a belated marketing campaign to produce something as bad as this? And now they are thinking about doing a sequel! If it will be anything like this first, horribly bad movie, then it will not be worth wasting our hard-earned money to go to the theater to see it. Out of all the negative hype that *Godzilla* is getting from both the critics and the fans, the people who made the film should have learned by now that if they do a sequel, they had better produce a product that will please the FANS. By this method, Emmerich, Devlin, Centropolis and TriStar would then be hearing the praise and cheers of the fans rather than listening to their boos and complaints. Far better than the quote by Dean Devlin to this reviewer that "Our movie did what it was supposed to do. We're all happy about it. If you don't like that, to hell with you."

## Godzilla In Name Only

Review by Rick Martin

In a nutshell, *Godzilla* was not a bad *kaiju* movie, but it was not a *Godzilla* film. A "terminator" view? or not, they only used the name *Godzilla* for its drawing power. The monsters were interesting looking, but were definitely based upon someone watching *Jurassic Park* a little bit too much. *Godzilla* stuff looked like a cross between a Jesus Lizard (a Walter Walker) and an iguana with pseudo-*Godzilla* fins added to his back, looking more like one of those lizards with frills and fins glued onto it, as seen in *John Allen's The Lost World*. The monster does breathe fire (unlike *Godzilla* who breathes radiation) in a few scenes, but he also runs from his enemies. Sony probably wanted a screen shoe-in for "See kids, you can run as fast as *Godzilla* with your new G-Jordans!"

The human actors were rather good, with the excellent Jean Reno (Leon in *The Professional*) outshining even *Godzilla* himself. There are a few plot holes and dampers, revealing that the film was probably cut just before release in order to make it shorter than 2½ hours. The plot and back story were more interesting than I would have expected after seeing *Independence Day* (give me *Mass Attacks!*), *War of the Worlds* and *Earth vs. the Flying Saucers* (anyday).

There was a nice dedication to Toruaki Tanaka (the original *Godzilla*'s co-creator) at the end of the film and they did give out some cool *Godzilla* film cell reproductions at the premiere screenings. I'd have to say that I'd give it a 9 out of 10 rating as a *kaiju* film, but only a 3 out of 10 as a "*Godzilla*" film. Why bother to use the name "*Godzilla*" if the majesty of the monster itself is removed? The answer is LICENSING and NAME RECOGNITION, the only two reasons for major studios to release a "Summer Film."

## NAME DOES MATTER

As a *Godzilla* movie, it's even worse than *Godzilla vs. Megalon*. But as a movie itself, it's a bit better than *The Lost World*. So, it's really a tale about a giant iguana and not *Godzilla*.

- Yoshitake Shibata

The movie's biggest flaw was the arrogance of Dean Devlin, although to dismiss the entire movie with a simple "It sucks" is just as arrogant. The special effects work was an admirable blend of restoration, CGI and good old-fashioned miniatures. The movie I contemplate the movie, the movie I appreciate it.

- Jim Walsh

I like it, but the title is a big problem. It should be called *Alligator* and not *Godzilla*. The special effects computer graphics are very nice. But it's not a serious movie, the story is funny, almost dream-like. For me, it's not a realistic movie, and maybe I will never see this film again.

- Shigeo Kajima

The main problem with TriStar's *Godzilla* is that neither TriStar nor Centropolis were interested in listening to what audiences wanted to see, only in telling them what they wanted to see.

- Jim Cirrone

It is not *Godzilla*. My hope is that they change the name from *Godzilla* to *Iguanodon*. I can not comment on how Japanese audiences will react to this film.

- Koichi Yaguchi

ed.

However, the expense tally is still not complete. In addition to the revenue from Japanese ticket sales, Toho also collects fixed royalties from Sony for the use of *Godzilla*. My understanding is that there was an initial payment, then fixed annual payments for each year that Sony retains the rights to use *Godzilla*. How large are these payments? I do not know for certain, but the total may amount to more than \$25 million dollars. Adding these costs into the equation (it is possible they are included in the production costs, no one outside of Sony knows for certain), the total deficit for *Godzilla* now becomes \$32 million dollars. Amazing how

\$270 million in gross ticket sales can still translate into such a substantial loss.

However, Sony will most likely STILL make a substantial profit on this film. How? The secondary money results from revenue generated by merchandising rights, television rights and home video sales. Taco Bell, Kodak, Hershey and numerous other companies paid huge sums for the merchandising rights to *Godzilla* '98. Kodak alone reportedly paid \$60 million for the rights to produce 35-mm. In addition, NBC contributed greater than \$30 million dollars for the right to televise *Godzilla*. And don't forget the millions from video sales this fall—all additional revenues that will quickly offset the \$32 million deficit.

So the movie will ultimately make a profit and Sony will recoup their big investment and then some. However, will future American *Godzilla* movies be profitable, too? Back in June, Sony announced plans for a sequel. The harsh reality of *Godzilla*'s performance may cause them to reconsider.

Can the sequel to *Godzilla* '98 gross \$270 million? Will just as many companies be willing to pay so much for the merchandising rights? Can a sequel with Centropolis at the helm succeed? Is the sequel destined for financial failure? The future will tell.

Please send e-mail comments to  
Jim Cleveland at [Clevelandj@aol.com](mailto:Clevelandj@aol.com)

# AN AMERICAN LIZARD IN TOKYO

by Jim Cirioacita

During the weeks that any Godzilla film is released theatrically in Japan, tons of tie-in products, from toys to t-shirts, will flood the retail store shelves. Tri-Star's *Godzilla* was certainly no exception in this area; in fact, since the film was intended for mainstream audiences, a much wider range of items were



marketed including some pretty goofy items that may leave one wondering, "What were they thinking?"

Mister Donut in Japan sported one such tie-in promotion with more levels to it than King Ghidorah has heads. First, there was the scratch game: with each purchase, you would receive a game piece to scratch off and gain points. Collect enough points and you could win prizes featuring a cartoonish Godzilla, which sounds neat although the



prizes being given away (various picnic accessories like a thermos, sandwich basket and meal-bag) seemed hardly worth the trouble. Next, if you bought a super-size soft drink in a special Godzilla aqueduct bottle (which actually looks more like an oxygen tank), you would have your choice of any one of five "Godzilla" pens, although you'd be lucky if you could actually find Godzilla on any of them. Of course, Godzilla promotional adver-

tising abounded all over Mister Donut bags, signs, posters and donut boxes, so much so that it almost seemed more desirable to collect any number of these items than the actual "giveaway" items themselves. (The graphics at the bottom of this page, for example, is Mister Donuts' take on the ubiquitous Tri-Star Godzilla eye logo.)

Supermarkets were offering any number of food tie-in products, too, with G-graphics prominently posted onto them. *Godzilla Cheese-Snack* by Meiji is one example: a puffed rice chocolate cereal snack which is curiously similar to the puffed rice chocolate cereal snacks that the company has always been producing, minus the G-name.

Now to actually get a collectible item with your snack, you'd have to buy Kabaya's *Godzilla Card Collection* and you'd get a cool hologram Godzilla card packaged with little chocolate balls that you can eat. Of course, you'll have to eat at least 30 boxes of



these little balls if you even want a fighting chance at getting the complete set of cards (although it sure beats the cards available in vending machines which sometimes take your money and fail to deposit the cards).

Yet the most bizarre promotional tie-in has to be the leading of Godzilla's name to Okamoto Condoms ("since 1934") to market their brand of birth control products. One must wonder how much fame will go for on the collector's market.



## mister Donut

SUMMER 1998

# ROYWARE'S MASKED PRIMER

## A BEGINNER'S GUIDE TO TOEI'S KAMEN RIDER SERIES

Although a lot of kage films may not realize it, Godzilla, Gamera and Ultraman are not the only famous Japanese sci-fi icons. Toei Productions started a wave in the early '70s known as the second "kage boom" (later known as the "heavenly boom"). The first kage boom included movies and television series such as *Godzilla*, *Ultra Q*, *Ultraman* and *Magma Fauci* (a.k.a. *Space Giant* in the US). In 1971, Toei released *Kamen Rider*, the first of their Heisei Super Heroes (*kamen* is Japanese for masked, while *heisei* is Japanese for transforming). At that time, giant heroes and monsters reigned supreme among children, yet Toei took a different approach and created a human-size hero who would inspire the countless tele-series that followed.

### The Evolution of a Hero

Like Ultraman, the character of Kamen Rider would go through many changes during the process of creation until the final draft was complete. Toei had ideas of producing a new children's TV series in 1969. Producer Tohu Maruyama and script writers Shozo Uehara, Masaru Igami and Shinichi Ishikawa, along with the Toei staff and Mirochi House Network, came up with the main idea for a new hero. In 1970, the first idea was scripted, a character known as Maxine K. This hero would have no super human ability, just a costume and advanced martial arts training.

Maxine K would have been along the same lines as Toei's earlier TV installments, *Gekko Kamen* (*Moonlight Mask*, 1958) and *Nensaku Kamen* (*Rainbow Mask*, 1959), battling regular villains. In this case, the enemy would be the eco-savvy terrorists called Shocker.

The next idea would be called *Masked Angel* in which a hero is jacked up with 300,000 volts of electricity and gains super powers. Masked Angel would battle the monster assassins that terrorize the children of a dead professor. This same idea was first entitled as *Cross Five* and then, as *Cross Mask*. A man named Takeshi Hongou (which would also be the name of Kamen Rider's alter ego in the final draft) became the masked hero dressed in motorcycle gear with a cross on his helmet. Cross Mask would battle Kuma-Ono (Japanese for spider-man—a monster, not the Marvel Comics denki). The title of the show would change once again to *Mask Rider K* and the hero would make a living as an El Santo-type masked wrestler known as Mister X.

In 1971, Toei went to comic artist Shotaro Ishinomori who had designed a character called Skull Man. The character appeared in *Shonen Magazine* (which is still published today) as a 100-page comic story. Ishinomori fiddled around with the Skull Man character design and it became more grasshopper-like. The

character was once again renamed as *Kamen Rider Hopper King*, the design was approved and filming began. The first episode aired on April 3rd, 1971 entitled *The Strange Spider Man*. The "Hopper King" aspect of the title was dropped and Kamen Rider was born.

### Kamen Rider (1971-73)

The first episode of *Kamen Rider* begins with biologist Takeshi Hongou, who also races



motorcycles, out on a practice run with instructor, Tobe Tachibana (played by the late Akira Kobayashi, who also starred as Captain Mamoru in *Ultraman*). Takeshi is kidnapped by the Shocker monster, Kamo-Otoko Shocker performs an operation on Takeshi, making him a cyborg/grashopper hybrid. Takeshi's school professor, Dr. Midorikawa, arrives to help him escape before he is able to be brainwashed to do Shocker's bidding.

Once on the outside, the two are attacked by Shocker's henchmen and Takeshi's newly-hatched abilities kick in. The Typhoon Henshin Belt, which was part of Shocker's experiment, activates and Takeshi transforms into the kazo ranger (reconstructed human), Kamen Rider. His motorcycle transforms, as well, becoming the super-powered Cyclone. In early episodes, Takeshi needed his motorcycle to change, but later on, he would perform a "henshin pose" by moving his arms in the air to become Kamen Rider. His powers included variations of the Rider Punch and Rider Kick, which caused his opponents to explode when hit. Rider can't win Kamo-Otoko in an action-packed battle with Shocker's henchmen being beat to a pulp. Kamen Rider kills his spider opponent and realizes he can never rest until Shocker is destroyed.

In episode 13, Takeshi leaves Japan to check on other Shocker domes in the world. In actuality, actor Hiroshi Fujioka, was injured from stunts. A second Rider, Kamen Rider No-go (number 2), who looked just like the first, was introduced. Hayato Ichimonji

also throughout the series' 98 episodes, proving the show to be a major hit. Of course, many sequels were spawned because of this, as well as kazo-sized super hero clones to fill the fans' thirst for this new genre.

Before a new Kamen Rider series was started, Toei released three new Henshin Hero series between 1972 and 1973. The first was *Chōjō Baron* / (*Superman Baron* I, 1972) in which two boys, Kenta Shirogami and Takeshi Kido, join together using a henshin pose called the Baron Cross in order to become a unified hero. Baron I battled the evil agent demon, Dango, whose members mostly resembled body parts. The second series released was *Henshin Ninja Arashi* (1972-73), in which a rings named Hayato has the ability to become the bird-like hero, Arashi, in order to battle against the Blood Organization. The third series, *Jōō Nagai Kikader* (*Android Kikader*, 1972-73), was a big hit in Japan and Hawaii. Each week, a robot man named Jōō transformed into battle mode as Kikader to ward off the evil Professor Ogi and his destructive organization called Dark. From this series came Kikader's arch-enemy Hakader, who ultimately starred in his own movie by director Keiichi Amamiya (*Zorron, Moon of Toss*) in 1995. Both *Henshin Ninja Arashi* and *Kikader* were created by Shotaro Ishinomori.

### Kamen Rider V3 (1973)

This now brings us to February 1973, when Toei brought us the most popular of Riders, *Kamen Rider V3*. The story begins with the arrival of a new evil organization called Destron who randomly murders the family of a young man, Shiro Kazari. Shiro (played by Hiroshi Miyasaka of *Geranger*, *Zorbet* and *Geranger* fame) vows revenge. He asks Takeshi and Hayato to change him into a cyborg to avenge the death of his family members. It's not until Shiro is hurt saving Rider 1 and Rider 2 from a Destron trap that the two heroes agree to go along with his wishes.

They operate on Shiro, giving him cyborg powers and a Double Typhoon Henshin Belt, thus enabling him to become Kamen Rider V3. V3 performs variations of the Rider Punch and Rider Kick; he also has a motorcycle called Hurricane to aid him, as well as other devices like the V3 Hopper, which enables him to shoot a capsule into the sky and see enemies that are miles away.

Later in the series, a fourth rider is also born from a scientist named Jōji Yaku (played by Atsushi Yanoaguchi). Destron turns on Jōji, who is tricked into working for them, and burns his arm in a highly-carnage



and. Fellow scientists save Jōji and perform an operation that leaves him with a cybernetic right arm. Using this super-powered arm and various attachments, Jōji becomes Rideman. Rideman aids V3 until he is killed saving the city from a proton missile, although he mysteriously returns in a later Kamen Rider series. V3 ran for 51 episodes, proving to be widely successful. For a good taste of the traditional Kamen Rider series, I recommend that first-time viewers check this series out, as it boasts some very cool monster designs and a heavily dramatic atmosphere.

Before the next Rider series, Toei released three more hero-orientated programs. The first was *Robot Kyoji* (*Robot Detective*, 1973), in which a non-transforming hero, a robot detective named K, battles crime on the high-tech level. K opposed the robotic crime forces of BAO. The second series, *Kikader 01* (1973-74), is a direct sequel to the original *Kikader*. This time, robot man Ichiro transforms into Kikader 01 to battle the new evil organization, Shadow, and an army of Hakaders. The third series, *Jozeemon* (*Lightning Man*, 1973-74), has Gou Watan transforming through two different stages to ultimately become a moth-like hero. First, he changes to Saigō(gu)man and then, into the fully-developed and emerged form of Jozeemon.



(played by Takeshi Saito) would take on the role of hero for awhile, later to be joined in battle with Kamen Rider Ichigo (number 1). (Editor's note: In Japan, both characters are frequently identified by their respective alter egos as *Hongo-Rider* and *Ichigo-Rider*.) Over the course of two years, the two heroes battled Shocker's various monsters and gener-



Insurrection first battled the Phantom Gundam (Gundam means military organization) and later on, the Deathgear Gundam, at which point the series' title became *Neos Gundam*. Once again, all three tele-series were created by Shojiro Ishiguro.

### Kamen Rider X (1974)

1974 brings us to *Kamen Rider X*. Oceanographer Kenzo An (played by Ryo Hayama) becomes a Kazerg soldier with the



help of his father, he does this in order to battle the New World menace, GGD (Government of Darkness). Kenzo transforms into Kamen Rider X with his harness belt called *Knadle*, he yells, "Get Up!" and his mask actually assembles piece-by-piece. X-Rider had a motorcycle as well, called *Cruiser*, sporting large propellers in order to gain hang time during jumps. The GGD monsters were based on mythological characters like Heracles, Atlas and Medusa, but in a mutated form. X-Rider also had an arch-rival called *Aperagost* who got in his hair often. While the X Rider character design was somewhat weak, the show itself was still fun.

### Kamen Rider Amazon (1974-75)

As one of the most memorable of all Rider designs, 1974's *Kamen Rider Amazon* took a big turn for originality. When a jungle village is attacked by the ten-faceted demon, Gorgos, of the new evil menace, Amazon, an old witch



doctor named Bago acts quickly. Gedor is after the all-powerful Ga-Ga brace to combine with their Ga-Ga brace, which would become a deadly weapon of fallen into the wrong hands. Bago gives the power of the Ga-Ga brace to a young man named Daisuke Yamamoto (played by Tetsu Dorman), a modern-day Tarzan of sorts. Yamamoto was raised by a tribe and called Amazon after he was found near a washed plane. Amazon wears the brace on his left bicep and has a harness belt called *Conforta*, which enables him to become Kamen Rider Amazon.

Amazon was not based on a grasshopper like his predecessors, instead, he was a komodo dragon or large lizard, for which he was almost named "Dragon Rider" during the show's scripting. Amazon's odd-shaped head and camouflage coloring make his design very attractive. Amazon meets Tobe Tachibana who makes him a motorcycle called *Jungleir*. This series would have parental groups in America going nuts due to the high content of violence and gore, as Amazon actually dismembers his foes. This Rider show stands on top for just its fight scenes alone.

### Kamen Rider Stonger (1975)



The same year that Toei introduced *Himitsu Sentai Goranger* (*Secret Task Force Goranger*, 1975-77), the first installment of the now-popular Super Sentai tele-series, 1975 brought us *Kamen Rider Stonger* in which Shigeru Iyo (played by Shigeru Araki) is dynamo-powered by scientists to become the kabutomushi (horned beetle)-style Kamen Rider Stonger. Shigeru activates his *Electra Henshin Belt* by sparking his hands together during his *henshin* pose. Stonger can release powerful charges of electricity, similar to a real species of beetle that can ward off enemies with a small amount of electricity. He also has a motorcycle called *Kabuteru*, which is really cheap-looking compared to the earlier Riders.

Stonger must battle yet another new evil organization, Black Satan. Later in the series, Stonger gets a Rider check for a pal; Yuriko Misaki becomes the ladybug hero named Tankle, who is eventually killed by Doctor Ketsu and thankfully, never returns in another Rider series.

### (New) Kamen Rider (1979-80)

After a couple years' rest from television screens, Kamen Rider returned in 1979. Although the show was titled *Kamen Rider*, the hero was referred to as *Sky Rider*. A sort of



revamp of the original series, *Hanabi Tsubasa* (played by Hiroaki Murakami) is captured by Neo-Shocker and transformed into the new bug-themed hero. Sky Rider's *Tensoude Hanaban Belt* puts a new twist into the Rider lore and enables him to fly during a very loosey special effects sequence. Sky Rider should have stayed grounded. Sky Rider's motorcycle, the *Sky Turbo*, is quite an improvement, especially when compared to Stonger's junkyard special. The Neo-Shocker monsters are a great improvement as well, boasting solid designs and well-constructed suits. The Sky Rider series had several surprise guest appearances by past Riders which make this installment worth seeing.

### Kamen Rider Super 1 (1980-81)

(New) *Kamen Rider* did well enough to spawn a follow-up series in 1980 called *Kamen Rider Super 1*. This time, NASA scientist Kenzo Dōi (played by Shunmao Takagishi) becomes the next incarnation of Kamen Rider,





the Super 1 suit was originally designed for space travel, but ends up being used for our hero's purposes instead. Kamen Rider Super 1 is here to battle off the new evil society of Dagma. Super 1 is equipped with the Mecha Hand, which has five variations: Super Hand, Electric Hand, Power Hand, Ro-Netzu (Cold Hot) Hand and Radar Hand, all of which are used for defense against Dagma monsters. Super 1 also has two motorcycles: V-Jet and a mecha cross-type Blue Version.

The series was cool at the beginning, but later on went down hill depending on your state of humor, as the monsters began to look like Santa monsters, taking on the appearance of household objects: soap, bug repellent, basketballs, refrigerators, etc. This more or less demonstrated that the Rider series was grasping for new ideas.

## Kamen Rider ZX

Kamen Rider ZX (pronounced Z-Cross) was introduced in a 1984 1-hour TV special called *10-Go Tansu! Kamen Rider Zenshi Shiyuu Ga!!* (Number 10's Birth! Kamen Rider All Members Together!!). Evil has arrived once more in the form of a new organization called the Badan Empire. A pilot, Riyou



Muramatsu (played by Shun Sugita), becomes Badan's Perfect Cyborg, but is angered by what they have done to his body. With his motorcycle, the Hell Driver, Kamen Rider ZX vows to destroy the new menace. He is also assisted by all of the previous Riders.

Various Japanese Kamen Rider encyclopedias list fourteen episodes that ultimately never saw the light of day. At the time of this special program's airing, Toei's *Uchū Keiji* (Space Sheriff) series was at its peak and my guess is that Kamen Rider may have been considered too old-fashioned to continue during this "martial hero boom." It's a shame because production shots depict several Rider team-ups and some outlandish monster designs.

## Kamen Rider Black (1987-89)

1987 saw one of the best Japanese sci-fi television series ever produced, *Kamen Rider*



*Black* is a product of excellent writing, choreography and style. The story is about a young man named Kotaro Minami (played by Tetsuo Kanata) who is captured along with his friend, Nobuhiko Akizuki, by the evil Darkness United Society of Golgoth. The two are chosen to be the legendary Contary Kings and each are given the powerful King Stones, which are put into their abdomens to later act as insertion belts. Kotaro is to be known as Black Sun and Nobuhiko as Shadow Moon.

Kotaro escapes before his mind is taken and announces himself as Kamen Rider Black. Rider Black is aided by the Irving, bio-engineered motorcycle, the Battle Hopper, and a super cycle called Road Setter. Throughout the series, Rider Black battles the Golgoth mutants, some of which are the best monster villains ever seen in a genre tele-series.

Eventually, Black must come face-to-face with Shadow Moon, who wants to destroy Black Sun so that he can take the throne of the Evil King and rule the Golgoth. Of course, Black wins, but this show will leave you with a high standard of what you will come to expect from a Japanese sci-fi tele-series. I've yet to see one that matches *Kamen Rider Black* for integrity and drama.

## Kamen Rider Black RX (1988-89)

The character of Kotaro Minami returned in 1988 for a direct sequel to *Kamen Rider Black*. This time, Kotaro is captured by aliens known as the Crona Empire. Hoping to get rid of their only threat for the conquest of Earth, they held Kotaro in a cell, but a stunky Crisis robot, Chidokura, allows him to escape. Kotaro is then banished into the blackness of space where energy beams split his King Stone, causing it to explode and sending him hurtling to Earth. Full of solar and cosmic energy, Kotaro is transformed into the Child of the Sun, Kamen Rider Black RX.

Destroyed by Shadow Moon in the last series, the Battle Hopper mutates into the new motorcycle, Aero-Batta (*Batta* means

grasshopper). Kamen Rider Black RX also has a super car with machobits called Rodera. RX's Henshin Belt, the Sun Riser, even allows him to pull out a laser blade called Rubelcane. RX also has the ability to change into two other Rider forms, Robo Rider and Bio Rider, due to his emotional state, although this becomes less apparent later in the series as he changes to either form at will. Aero-Batta changes as well to either Robosizer (for Robo Rider) or Makinagabber (for Bio Rider). Robo Rider's weapon is the Vortech Shooter, while Bio Rider's is the Bio Blade.

This series should have waited a year to be made so that more time could have been spent on scriptwriting, as the episodes tend to get a little flaky at times. The return of



Shadow Moon and all the old Riders makes this apparent. All in all, *Kamen Rider Black RX* is very fun and full of hyper-active action.

## Shin Kamen Rider (1992)

After another hiatus, Kamen Rider returned in 1992 with an all-new, organic Guyver-like look in a made-for-video movie called *Shin Kamen Rider Prologue* (*The True Kamen Rider Prologue*). Motorcycle racer Shin Kazumatsu (played by Yoshitaka Ishikawa) unknowingly becomes part of a deceased experiment by the ISS (Institute of Super Science Technology) to create a cyborg soldier. Shin's operation is a success and he becomes a top secret weapon, code-named Masked Rider.

Shin, now a grasshopper-human hybrid, is chased by the CIA, as well as by an assassin from the evil syndicate that secretly controls

*Continued on page 64*

# TOHO IN AMERICA

A Critical Comparison Between the Japanese and American Versions of Toho's Science Fiction & Fantasy Films

## PART V: MOTHRA

### *Mothra*

Released July 30, 1961  
Official Running Time: 101 minutes

### *Mothra*

Released May 10, 1962  
by Columbia Pictures  
Running Time: 90 minutes

Available on  
Columbia TriStar Home Video

Analysis by Brian R. Culver

Toho's 1961 release, *Mothra*, was a turning point for the company, as well as for the genre it represented. As has been written elsewhere, its success confirmed *kaiju eiga* as Toho's most lucrative output and established them as the world leader in this type of film. America had ceased making these films largely in the 1950s and the few made in other countries came off as attempts to cash in on Toho's success.

The release of *Mothra* also unraveled the monster genre in Japan by blurring the lines between sci-fi and fantasy. While *Daijyaku Varan* (*Great Monster Varan*, 1958, US title *Varan the Unbelievable*, 1962, see *Kaiju-Fan* #5), *Uchu Daisensou* (*The Great Space War*, 1959, US title *Battle In Outer Space*, 1960, see *Kaiju-Fan* #6) and to a lesser degree, *Gyōrin no Gyakushū* (*Godzilla's Counterattack*, 1955, US title *Gygora the Fire Monster*, 1959, see *Kaiju-Fan* #6) had gotten away from the serious subject of atomic weapons, they were still basically sci-fi films with everything justified by a scientific explanation no matter how implausible. Japanese fantasy films up to this point were primarily period films and few, such as *Nippon Tengu* (*The Devil of Japan*, 1959, US title *The Three Treasures*, International title *Age of the Gods*), featured any kind of *kaiju*.

*Mothra* begins much as any other *kaiju* or sci-fi film would: in modern times, shipwrecked survivors are picked up from an island previously subjected to atomic tests. Despite that,

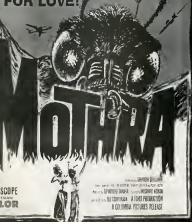
the survivors aren't radioactive and claim to have seen natives living on the island, which prompts a scientific expedition. From this point, however, the film proceeds to reveal

strange things which aren't the result of science or human tampering, yet seemingly defy explanation. A similar notion was foreshadowed in the script of *Daijyaku Varan*, where



# MIGHTIEST MONSTER IN ALL CREATION!

RAVISHING  
A UNIVERSE  
FOR LOVE!



Unlike the Japanese release poster (opposite page), Columbia's release materials promoted *Mothra* as a typical giant insect-on-the-loose flick rather than the well-crafted science-fiction fantasy film that Toho had actually produced.

the village superstitions concerning the monster prove to be more accurate than the scientific explanations brought forth.

On the sexually-unsaturated Infant Island (called Bato Island in US version, even though a sign that clearly reads "Infant Island" is Japanese is shown on the pier from which the expedition embarks for the island), scientists

discover natives inhabiting a thriving rain forest, their lives apparently untouched by the atomic tests partially due to a native plant which protects them who consume its juice from radioactivity. The eventually-revealed, foot-high ovate women (hereafter known as the Shobijin, played by Eiko and Yama Ito—a pop music duo who performed under the name The Pearls) and their gigantic guardian, Mothra,

won't be the result of atomic testing, but rather are beings who predate the tests and can't be sterilized by scientific theory. In fact, after first suggesting a link between Infant Island and the fabled Pacific Continent (a.k.a. Mu), the film offers no attempt to explain the existence of these beings. (Editor's note: Shobijin are small beauties is derived from the Japanese who meaning small and light meaning beautiful women.)

During production, Adachi had been pre-sold to Columbia Pictures, who contributed financially to the production, the studio dictated a rewrite to include a more elaborate finale than was originally scripted, involving Mothra's attack on the American-like locale of New York City, Rodinia. (Editor's note: *Rodinia* period that this scene isn't in the *Rodinia* version of the film due to protests from anti-violence activists in that country. At press time the *Karyu-Pan* staff was unable to verify this, primarily because we can't find *Rodinia* on any of our maps). This would be the last Toho sci-fi film distributed by Columbia, who ultimately produced a shorter version of Honda's film for American audiences. A comparison of the two versions of the film follows, with deletions from the US version noted in bold type.

The opening credits sequences are slightly different and are compared below:

## JAPANESE VERSION

- As the music begins, the Toho logo appears and fades to black.
- Fade into the film's title, displayed in front of the first of six different backgrounds depicting sections of stone with Infant Island hieroglyphics carved into them. The light cast onto the stone can be seen flickering and changing color occasionally. Fade to black.
- The remainder of the credits, save for two, are displayed with the background changing four times.
- Cut to a black screen, which fades into the final background over which Eiji Tsuburaya and Ishiro Honda's screen credits are displayed consecutively. The music ends as the picture fades to black.

## AMERICAN VERSION

- The Columbia logo appears, then fades to black, over music.
- Fade into the film's title, followed by the remainder of the credits. As the credits play, five of the backgrounds from the Japanese version are joined via jump cuts, but in a different order (for the record, the order is 5,2,4,3,6). The light cast onto the stone is constant and doesn't change, as though the backgrounds were in shot as still frames. The music ends along with

the credits on the picture fades to black. Curiously, the US credits, although extensive, fail to credit Frankie Sakai, Harumi Kozuma and Kyoko Kagawa—the film's three lead actors!

The arrival of the Robinson delegation is slightly chartered. In the Japanese version, the scene begins with a close-up of a sign with Japanese writing at the airport. Dr. Haradawa (Ken Uchida) and Chajo (Harumi Kozuma) walk by the sign and meet the Robinsons as they disembark, along with several reporters and photographers. From behind the congregators, Michi (Kyoko Kagawa) and several other reporters get on some sort of unseen platform and are then seen taking photos of the delegates from overhead. As Michi gets down, Tanechan (Frankie Sakai) spots Clark Nelson (Jerry Lee, billed as "Jelly" Lee in the US credits) and his entourage getting off the plane.

Following the expedition's arrival at the Infant Island jungle, the US version depicts a shot of Tanechan's point of view as he proceeds through the jungle. The first part of the scene that follows of Tanechan appearing from behind foliage to spy on Nelson is also trimmed. These edits suggest that Tanechan was observing Nelson for some time as opposed to making up as is implied in the Japanese version.

Chajo's encounter of the cave containing mutant plants was more involved in the Japanese version. Chajo is seen approaching a clearing containing the opening of a cave. After observing the entrance, he goes inside. As he proceeds into the cave, he spots the mutant plants and comments via an audible thought monologue, "Oh—what strange plants. Why they're giant, abnormal mutations of molds. The survivors must have drunk the juice of these." Something further inside the cave catches his attention, which is revealed upon his approach to be a large stone that has hieroglyphs carved into it. The Japanese music cue for this scene has been shortened to fit the US edit.

Responding to his "torn alarm" distress signal, the expedition encounters Chajo, who reveals that the Shobijin are hiding nearby. "It occurred to me somehow last night that they'd been attracted in some way to the sound of the alarm. That's the reason they were here to rescue me, I guess," Chajo explains. The Shobijin begin moving their mouths, but only Yaji Kozeki's high-pitched music cue

(resembling a melodic, insect buzz) is heard. Tanechan exclaims, "It's a song! They're singing to communicators!" Chajo corrects, "They're not singing—it's how they speak. I'm not sure how they're doing it, but it's some kind of strange language." In order to obscure the need for this dialog, the American version lowers the volume of the "song" music cue and dubs the Shobijin speaking in unintelligible utterings.

Upon returning to Japan, the expedition members get off the ship, accompanied by a narration that is heard only in the Japanese version: "The ship has docked. The expedition led by Nelson journeyed to investigate one of life's mysteries. What amazing things do they have to report?" The scene then shifts to the Nitta Shinban offices, the newspaper for which Tanechan and Michi work for. There the News Editor (Takeshi Shimura) is speaking (presumably to Michi) on the telephone: "A special event? It wasn't just a special event; they went to an island with a 300,000-radiation count! What happened to Fukuda (A.K.A. Tanechan)? I want you to find him!" The next shot is back at the expedition return of Michi looking for Tanechan. This version combines both parts of the expedition return celebration into one sequence. The information presented in the removed dialog and narrative—that the expedition isn't talking about their discovery—is reflected in later dialog in both versions of the film.

A shot of Nelson's plane taking off is shortened in the American version, deleting a superimposed newspaper headline in Japanese:

Prompted by Chajo, the Shobijin recognize him as the man they rescued on Infant Island. They both smile and begin to move their mouths as though trying to speak. They later do this again just before speaking telepathically to say thank you to the group.

Approximately 30 seconds have been removed from the sequence depicting the Infant Island ritual that results in the hatching of Mother's egg. The music and sound effects have been subsequently re-edited to fit. The removed footage consists of a series of medium and close-up shots of the native participants playing drums, hitting rocks together and dancing, including two close-ups of a woman's dancing feet. As the surrounding footage consisted of mostly long

shots, the abbreviated US edit maintains the overall concept of the scene without dwelling on the participants.

The first part of Nelson's meeting with the Nitta Shinban staff has been removed. The scene begins with a shot of Nelson (off-screen except for his hands) holding up a Japanese newspaper article accompanied by a photo of the Shobijin and proclaiming, "Look at this story! I want a retraction!" Nelson's aide, Nakamura (Tetsu Nakamura) adds, "Your newspaper has no right to print this story!" "The press is obliged (sic) to print the truth just as we see it," challenges the editor, as the scene continues.

The Peimats' second vocal, "The Daughters of Infant" (which is performed as part of the "Secret Garden Show" that Nelson had forced the Shobijin to sing), has been largely removed, turning an accompanying sequence, which originally juxtaposes the song with the destruction of the ship *Groves*, into two separate events. The sequence begins with a shot of the Shobijin's miniature carriage flying across the top of the auditorium, the ceiling is dark blue with sequins, creating a starry sky. Music begins, followed by the Shobijin harmonizing as a prelude to song. As the carriage flies by, the auditorium walls & ceiling dissolve respectively into the ocean and starry sky, with the Mothers lava swimming towards the carriage. From inside the carriage the Shobijin continue harmonizing and then begin to sing. As the song continues, an announcer is seen in front of recording equipment as the auditorium who explains, "What you are now hearing, everyone, is one of life's great wonders." The scene then shifts to the bridge of the *Orion* where the announcer's broadcast is being heard over the radio: "The only way to truly appreciate this wonder is to hear it for yourself." The ship is then shown at sea followed by a shot of Mothers swimming. The scene cuts back to the Shobijin on stage singing, followed by two sequences of the audience watching them. The Shobijin are seen again in a long shot, still singing while performing holding Oriental fans. As the Shobijin's song continues, the *Groves* is seen at sea again, the camera panning left to reveal Mothers swimming towards the ship (the music fades out at this point in the US version, just prior to the beginning of the lyrics). From the bridge the Captain yells, "Hard to port!" and the helmsman complies immediately.



A compelling sequence in the Japanese version, which contrasts the Shobijin's beautiful vocal performance (top) against the destruction of the ship Oriole by the Mothra larva (above), is drastically downplayed in the American version of the film.

Mothra is seen tearing the ship and then, through the windows of the bridge as the Shobijin's song fades out. The Mothra larva leaps onto the ship, crushing it and flooding the bridge. In the last shot, Mothra can be seen descending onto the ship and breaking it in half, finally submerging between the two halves and causing the forward section to rise out of the water.

- Bridging the attack on the Oriole and the subsequent press conference with Nelson is a brief shot panning down a stack of Japanese newspapers bearing a headline and photos of the Oriole and two crewmembers. This sequence is accompanied by a brief music cue.
- The military's first sighting of Mothra and subsequent preparations have been shortened in the US version. A plane is seen in the air, the scene switching to a shot outside the cockpit of the pilot racing to the subsequent sight of Mothra on

the horizon at sea. The pilot radios Mothra's position to HQ (a sequence in the Japanese version in which the dialogue is very poorly synced to the mouth movements of the pilot). The plane is seen again followed by the pilot's point of view showing Mothra swimming below. Following another shot of the plane flying, the scene cuts again to the pilot in the cockpit frantically talking into his radio. Although there is no dialog for this scene in the Japanese version, the US version dubs in the line "Yellow search, Mothra, and swimming in the ocean!" Mothra is seen on the horizon again, following another shot of the cockpit, this time moving into the distance. Mothra is seen swimming in close-up and then is seen from a distance as the reconnaissance plane flies over her. The scene shifts to the war room, where an officer is seen drawing a line on a map to determine where Mothra is going. Seeing the results, the military commander (Suzuburo Kawano) says, "It's head-

ing for Tokyo—smack!" The scene shifts again, this time to an airfield where yellow drums are seen being loaded onto bomber planes. Three reconnaissance jets are seen taking off as the sequence comes to an end. These shots set up the later attack on Mothra at sea, which features the same planes and yellow drums (containing a substance that ignites when fired upon) replicated in miniature.

- Following the military preparations sequence, the beginning of the scene which takes place in the Nitta Shieiban newsroom has been deleted in the American version. In the Japanese version, the sequence begins with the news editor talking on the phone as Miki hands him some photos, which he glances at while speaking: "We're on top of it. What? The lawsuit against us? Oh, that's just a distraction. We'll be there to cover the attack on Mothra." He then hangs up the phone. The American version begins the scene just after he hangs up, when he hands the photographs back to Miki.
- An introduction to the dam workers who save Mothra has been removed. The previous scene occurring in Nelson's office ends with the Shobijin singing from their cage. The music continues, but quickly fades as the scene switches to a stocky dam worker (hereafter referred to as worker #1,) who enters the dam monitoring office with food and proceeds to talk to his fellow employee (hereafter known as worker #2):  
 Worker #1: I'm here.  
 Worker #2: Thanks for coming.  
 Worker #1: I was lucky.  
 Worker #2: You're joking!  
 Worker #1: Hah? Between God, prayers and friends, I'm not violent enough to go against Mothra for this guy!  
 Worker #2: Well you're not alone there.  
 A rumbling is heard as worker #2 begins pouring two cups of tea.  
 Worker #2: Is that an earthquake?  
 Worker #1: Doesn't seem like one.  
 Worker #2 heads to the table where worker #1 has begun eating rice cakes. The scene cuts to water churning just outside the dam office and then back inside as worker #2 shrieks in horror and drops both cups of tea. After another shot of water churning, worker #2 sits facing worker #1, whose back is to the camera. Worker #1 turns around with a rice cake stuffed in his mouth, the shock of what he sees causes his eyes to go wide



The plot of *Mothra* suggests that the atrocities of the latest island arrives were the survivors of a long-ago submerged Pacific continent. This real-life theory would be further explored in slush genre films as *Atsagon*, *Monster from a Prehistoric Planet* and *Godzilla vs. Megalon*.

Shoji's (Akira Tazawa) diary, which is missing from the American version. The sequence shows three consecutive Japanese newspaper headlines respectively covering Mothra, the destruction of the dam and Nelson, followed by a brief shot of the diary sitting on a nightstand, followed by the shot where the American version picks up at Chajo reading the diary.

• The larval Mothra's rampage on Tokyo has been shortened by about two-and-a-half minutes, the removed footage consisting of an argument concerning anywhere from two to ten shots. With one exception, the music and effects tracks have been removed to obscure the edits. The deleted segments are noted below with a brief description of missing footage for reference.

• As Mothra appears in Tokyo, tanks travel the streets as civilians flee. The police direct the civilians to safety as three jet planes fly over Mothra. Tanks take position as electrical tower, as the planes fly overhead. The planes fire at the assault on Mothra commences.

tion near the assault on Mothra commences.

• Mothra destroys a Mobilgas station and the scene cuts to the war room, where we hear over the loudspeaker, "Mothra is approaching the city near Unit Two's position." Three shots are seen of policemen directing civilians while vehicles move on the streets. A soldier is seen in close-up saying, "Unit Two is ready and awaiting orders." Back at the war room, we hear: "Unit Three is moving into position in the city." A shot of the elaborately-lit buildings in the Ginza District is shown, followed by scenes of planes, tanks and helicopters moving into position. Jet planes start to attack again, as Mothra approaches an intersection.

• The Shibuya District is quickly evacuated before Mothra arrives. The arena lights from the previously seen Ginza buildings suddenly go off. Tanks and jets are seen in several shots moving into position. Mothra is fired upon as it proceeds down a street toward the

tanks. Crowds are still being directed away by soldiers during the attack. Several tanks scramble to turn around as Mothra gets too close. Mothra keeps coming as it is fired upon and civilians are directed away.

• As the assault continues, Mothra is unheeded, smashing completely through a building with a large clock on the front. A few tanks continue to get close to the immense creature, as buildings crumble nearby. From the lead tank, a soldier looks out from the hatch and orders the other tanks to turn around. The tanks turn, but one of them is crushed by debris as Mothra continues its advance. Another tank is caught in the debris while the others escape.

• Mothra continues advancing, showering everything in its path with rubble from the structures that it plows through. Tanks and jeeps continue to get out of the way. Several buildings catch fire, causing fire trucks to move through the streets. In the last shot of this sequence, buildings all along the Tokyo skyline are seen on fire. The US version features a very obvious jump in the music score prior to this last shot.

• The fires cause a traffic jam for the remaining evacuees, forcing Nelson and his henchmen to change their escape route. Back at the war room, the commander orders, "Anzaki and Akasakami have been evacuated. We must try to stop it there." Soldiers aim artillery cannons, and Tokyo Tower is seen in the distance near a Birely's sign (one of two blatant advertisements for the Japanese orange juice company that appear in the film's miniature sequences). A helicopter passes the tower, revealing just how huge the miniature set was for this scene. More crowds flee, as Mothra continues to move towards Tokyo Tower.

• Immediately following the first scene of Nelson and his men at the airport, the newer editor shows up at the location from where Tsiachan and Mishi are observing Mothra building a cocoon in a scene deleted from American prints. This deletion is curious for the fact that it includes a line from the following exchange that is referred to later in the American version:

Tsiachan:	Editor!
Editor:	I don't pay you is sight-see!
Tsiachan:	But what about Mothra building a cocoon?

and he quickly swallows the rice cake whole.

• In his office, after being forced to cancel a performance, Nelson becomes annoyed with the Shogun's constant stinging to Mothra, "Stop that noise!" he barks. "You can cry and moan from now until doomsday, but you're not going back to that island!" The girls continue singing, prompting from Nelson: "Be quiet! I won't tell you again!" The back of the girls' heads are seen from above, followed by a shot from below of Nelson's henchman (Osman "Johnny" Yuseph) as he lowers Dr. Haradawa's case (established earlier as a telepathic wave disrupter to deter Mothra's attempts to locate the twins) over their cage. The Shobijin turn around and look up in surprise. The henchman secures the case to the cage. Nelson commands, "In the bag," prompting the henchman to open a nearby suitcase which will be used to transport the girls.

• In the Japanese version, a transition sequence appears between the destruction of the dam and Chajo's discovery of

**Editor:** What about Nelson?  
**Tsukahan:** I don't know where he's at yet.  
**Editor:** What are I, your G-Man? Watching Mothra isn't a story? You're a disgrace!

taken Caucasian actor, Robert Downham, appearing in the first of several genre roles) looks and replies, "No, not yet. I don't know what could have happened to them!" From the crowd, a panicked bystander yells out, "If we don't return the fairies quickly, Newkirk City will be destroyed!" enraging the crowd to become unruly. All dialogue in this scene is in English with Japanese subtitles.

A brief portion of Mothra's attack on Newkirk City is cut from the US version. Immediately following the scene noted above, Mothra is seen flying through smoke. A tall building crumbles as the giant insect flies over a bridge. Debris

falls on the street outside a drug store. Mothra passes over the city again, the wind of its wings blowing cars and debris into an awning-covered storefront at street level. Mothra banks and flies toward the camera, continuing its attack.

A brief scene which further develops the Sier's religious motif has been removed. After Chaga, Tsukahan and Mido arrive at the church and receive word of the Newkirk City attack, two priests are introduced. "Now we have to rely on God's will," says one priest. As he makes a Hail Mary sign with his hands, the other asks, "Father, have mercy on our souls." The bell tower is seen with

Nelson's attempt to get past a Rollician military policeman and a Japanese police officer at the airport, which unfolds in two parts (plus an earlier scene of Nelson getting a forged passport) interest web-seekers at Mothra's cocoon, has been trimmed to the barest essentials in the American version. Following the deleted exchange above, the two officers stop Nelson. "What do you have in the bag, sir?" asks the MP, referring to the suitcase the Shobijin is hidden in. Handing his forged passport to the MP, Nelson replies, "This bag is the property of the Rollician (sic) embassy. Do you want to open it?" Following a cut back to the cocoon, the scene resumes with the MP looking at the passport and returning it to Nelson. "No sir, that won't be necessary. Sorry to have bothered you," he tells Nelson. He further tells the Japanese policeman, "It's okay," who in turn says to Nelson, "Sorry." It should be noted that in the Japanese version, this entire exchange (except for the Japanese policeman's line) is in English with Japanese subtitles.

The arrival of the Rollician Atomic Heat Cannon is about 30 seconds longer in the Japanese version. As Mothra's completed cocoon is seen in the morning light, the gigantic weapons appear, being moved down the street and across a bridge. The scene pans across an area set up for the TV and radio press, as well as a stone turret where the military observers are set up. An announcer broadcasts from the press area: "With Mothra's cocooned to Tokyo Tower, the military plans to surround the cocoon while the monster is dormant. They hope to attack while it's inside to avoid a confrontation." As more shots of the cocoon are seen, the announcer continues: "Mothra is not moving. The attack will begin shortly."

A scene has been deleted following Nelson's death as two Rollician officials guard the Shobijin in front of a church populated by bystanders, awaiting the arrival of Tsuge, Tsukahan and Michi. The older official (Ed Keane), looking impatient, asks, "Didn't (sic) they come yet?" The younger official (Toku's



All the winging of Columbia Pictures who contributed financially to the production, Toho filmed a more elaborate finale than was originally scripted involving Mothra's attack on the America-like locale of Newkirk City in the fictitious country of Rolica.

the sun directly behind the center of the cross, as the Japanese trio walks through the bystanders to look at it. Upon seeing the tower with the sun behind it, they realize the connection between Mothra and religious symbols.

- More dialogue of a religious nature was removed. Chajo instructs the Robinsons to make preparations that he believes will stop Mothra's attack. "Will a work do you think, Chajo?" Miki asks him, to which he replies, "Well I don't doubt the power of prayer." "It's not so mysterious, but it's all up to God now," adds Tetsuhiro. Following this, Miki puts her hands together and says a quick prayer, Tetsuhiro makes a Hail Mary motion with his hands and Chajo bows his head, but is quickly distracted by the scattering crowd. Chajo says, "Well, we better get going," and the trio starts to leave. In the US version, the scene ends with Chajo's reply to Miki, although he is dubbed as saying, "I don't know. If it doesn't, I don't know what will."
- Although no footage was deleted, dialogue was left out of the American version just prior to the film's ending. After the Shobijin have been returned to Infant Island, a stone in the island temple is shown rising out of rock until the hieroglyphic symbol for Mothra (a cross with rays of light emanating from the intersection) is revealed. As this happens, there is a flash of light and a disembodied voice (the same one heard summoning Mothra to awake during the egg hatching ceremony in the Japanese version) is heard saying, "The way to peace is yours to discover forever."
- In the Japanese version, the final image of the film is of Infant Island, as the Japanese symbol "Om" (The End) appears on the screen and slowly gets larger before the scene fades to black. The American version contains the same shot of the island, but before the "Om" symbol appears, it cuts to English text that reads:

A Toho Production  
in  
Techniscope  
THE END

This text appears over the rock background from the Japanese opening credits sequence and then changes to another background, similar to the others but framed differently than any found in the Japanese version.

# MANY, MANY MOTHRAS

Why Repeated Viewings of *Mothra* Never Seem To Be Quite the Same as the Previous Ones...

By Brian R. Culver

Even though home video is a wonderful thing and an invaluable tool when it comes to writing "Toho Is America," it also consistently leads to more work for its writers. After a comparison of the English and Japanese theatrical versions of a film, more often than not we find ourselves adding an extra paragraph or two explaining why the tape you bought at Samcoast isn't precisely what was described in the article as the "American version." This almost seems to be the rule when it comes to home video releases of the American versions of these films.

*Mothra* represents a rare case in that not only do US video releases and TV broadcasts vary from the original American theatrical release, but multiple variations of the original Japanese film appear on home video in that country as well. Additionally, between the formats described above, three American versions exist! It's difficult to decide which is more frustrating—that so many variations exist or that they all seem to be born not by design, but by repeated bawling of the rather common task of creating the video masters.

A description of the variants found is described below and organized by country of origin.

## JAPANESE VIDEO RELEASES

The variations found of *Mothra* in Japan can be seen by comparing the two video editions most known to westerners—the two laser disc releases of the film.

The first disc (TLL-2007) appears to utilize the same transfer as Toho Video's first Japanese widescreen VHS release. This transfer (before the days of stereo sound video or digital audio laser disc) appears to represent a complete mono version of the Japanese theatrical release of *Mothra*. In recent years, a remastered version of *Mothra* was released (TLL-2664) on laser disc, again in widescreen, but this time in digital stereo sound (representing the original release's Prospects Stereophonic Sound mix) and with the Japanese theatrical trailer included as an extra.

While these amendments technically qualify the newer disc as a slightly different version of the film, they aren't enough to normally warrant noting. What truly pegs this newer release as a "variant" version is a difference found on the remastered film's soundtrack. On Side B from 38m15s to 38m43s (*Mothra* taking flight for the first time), the wrong music cue (an instrumental of the same melody sung by the Shobijin as *Mothra*

emerges from the cocoon) is heard over this scene until it abruptly switches back to the correct music! This audio anomaly does not appear in any other known video release of the film.

Oddly, neither of these arguably most-definitive releases attempt to insert the film's opening overture, as heard on the film's soundtrack CD (SLCS-5064), at the beginning of the video, as was done with Toho Video's laser disc of *The Last War*. The music exists, but at press time, we were unable to confirm whether or not it was actually used in theaters.

For the sake of completeness, it should also be mentioned that a laser disc of *Mothra* was included in Toho Video's Champion Matsuri box set. This was the rarer version recut by Hideo Itano to only 62 minutes!

## AMERICAN VIDEO RELEASES

RCA Columbia first released *Mothra* on home video in 1984. The source for this video appears to have been a 16-millimeter pin-and-socket television print. As such, the video was identical to TV broadcasts up to that time (i.e. a pan-and-scan version of the American theatrical release). Other than a few seconds missing at reel changes and a brief, inexcusable blackout of part of the shot of a newspaper headline superimposed over the shipwreck survivors, this video transfer is otherwise fairly accurate to US theatrical/TV prints. In 1986, RCA Columbia released *Mothra* in slightly different packaging—on an identical video transfer as the original, save for a new hi-fi mono audio track which was advertised on the new box. In 1988, the video rights to *Mothra* and several other RCA Columbia video titles were licensed to Goodtimes Home Video, who released the video only in the cheaper LP speed. Bearing two different box designs, the Goodtimes tapes utilized the same transfer as the previous RCA Columbia releases, though the film's opening Columbia logo was removed.

While the Goodtimes tapes were still being sold in stores, Columbia proceeded to remaster *Mothra* for television broadcasts, presumably with the intention of using the new transfer for future video releases. Two attempts were made, neither of which was completely successful. These new transfers appear to have been made by combining the audio of the shortened US version with a print of the film which included most if not all of the scenes previously seen only in the Japanese version. Those who attempted this remaster were ap-



parently unprepared for this and had no guide for matching the audio to the video.

The first attempt used on the Cinematix cable network in 1991 and was a complete disaster. Running approximately two-and-a-half minutes shorter than the previous video releases, the soundtrack falls out of sync at every point where Japanese footage was deleted because the footage is no longer missing! This would go on for a few seconds until the correct audio and video would sync up again...that is, until the next scene with deleted footage intact would throw it off again. One can only imagine the telephone operators constantly having to stop the machine to figure out what had happened. This problem is worse during *Mothra's* arrival in Tokyo, up until the point where *Mothra* builds the coon, the audio and video are completely off, with voices and sounds accompanying completely unrelated images.

Fortunately, Columbia made a second attempt which was far more successful, though not perfect. It is this version, which has aired on American television since around 1992 and was re-released on VHS tape by Columbia TriStar Home Video in 1995. This transfer is about 30 seconds longer than the original US version and again features the accidental insertion of Japanese footage previously cut out.

The following is a list of significant differences from the original US version, with approximate times indicated:

- A 7-second P.O.V. shot of Tetsuchen walking through the jungle is included, heretofore exclusive to the Japanese version.
- A 12-second shot of Chigo approaching the cave entrance is added, again previously not included in the US version. The music from the following scene (inside the cave) has been repeated here to serve as the soundtrack.
- Some of the shots of natives originally deleted are restored at the expense of other shots that were in the US version. Despite these changes, the length of the scene matches that of the original US version. As Columbia originally edited down a longer scene from the Japanese version, some errors were made in re-creating the US version's editing. These random substitutions dilute the streamlined American editing, which focused on the egg hatching, without retaining enough of the Japanese version to be worthwhile.
- The Pesants' vocalizing (the prelude to the musical number restored from the US version) has been cut in half, repeated/looped and then abruptly stopped. In previous US versions, the singing continued to a fade out.
- A scene has been deleted of a moon pilot

yeeling "Mothra, and swarming in the ocean!" This was intact in the Cinematix print.

- A scene in missing of Nelson (Jerry Ito) downing a shot of bombs before speaking. Again, this scene appears in the Cinematix print.
- A restored shot of people running saves the film's soundtrack to fall out of sync for about a minute of *Mothra's* approach to Tokyo.
- The Shibuya District attack is marred by a failure to duplicate Columbia's original editing of scenes. While about 40 seconds of effects footage from the Japanese version have been restored (primarily that of the tanks getting crushed by debris), the matching of sound and picture is hit and (moody) miss, with sounds of police whistles and jet planes being heard where there are none.

Despite the glitches and the fact that it's not a precise reproduction of the original American theatrical version of *Mothra*, the new transfer far outweighs the reconstruction problems and is the best presentation of the US version ever released on home video. One can only hope that Columbia TriStar will undertake a letterboxed transfer on VHS, laser disc, DVD or possibly all three. This would be a great opportunity to fix some of the problems from the last transfer.

(Portions of this article originally appeared in the *Annual Readers' Japanese section of Video Watchdog Special Edition #2, 1995*)



Evaluating the Americanization of *Mothra* is difficult. True, a lot of footage was deleted (just over 10 minutes) and some significant aspects—the Shibuya's musical communication, the religious conviction to *Mothra*, the ironic destruction of the ship during a beautiful song—were among those deleted. However, the American version comes across as a faster-paced version of the same film with no narrative gaps caused by the deletions and somehow doesn't seem to suffer as one might expect when compared with the original Japanese film. The hatching scene is arguably improved by deleting the close-ups of the eggs, which only serve as a digression. Clearly, the editing of the American version was done with respect to Honda's original film, note that many of the deletions are in the form of entire sequences, allowing large portions of Honda's original editing to survive as opposed to merely re-editing any sequences. In short, Columbia's *Mothra* comes across as an orientatizing, but perhaps lighter film than Honda's original version.

The dubbing is by Titr Sound Studios, who received their first onscreen credit for a *kayu* egg with *Mothra* and would go on to dub many other genre titles for US companies, such as American International Pictures. Although their dubbing for *Mothra* demonstrates the usual quality associated with their work—well-acted dialogue which approximates the original actor's appearance and synched to the character's lip movements as close as humanly possible—it's somewhat inconsistent in its attempt to sound "Japanese." Whereas most dubbing would substitute Japanese words with western equivalents, *Mothra's* dubbing features the word *shinshu* (newspaper) in one scene and in another, Chigo calls out for his brother using the expression *oo*, which would normally be dubbed into something like *hey*. This is also one of the few times where Titr dubbed several Japanese characters with stereotypical Japanese accents, with the *r* and *l* sounds often reversed; one such example is Tetsuchen's greeting of "hello!" to Nelson on the island. Typically, Titr would voice all the characters with a generic, nondescript foreign accent, as would certainly be the rule in the later genre films that they dubbed. The voices used to dub Frankie Sakai (who usually does the leading man voice) and Jerry Ito (possibly current AMC host Bob Doran, who was also the narrator for the Titr-dubbed *Destroy All Monsters*) sound amazingly like the respective actor's real speaking voices. Hiroshi Kawanishi's character, Chigo, sounds as though he may have been dubbed by Peter Fernandez, the voice of *Speed Racer*.

Parvati's review of *Mothra* was highly critical, summing up the film as a "crudely managed monster melange." The review continues





to state, "Though elaborately produced — the post-dubbed film is too awkward in dramatic construction and crude in histrionic style to score appreciably at the box office." Via further backhanded compliments, Farver adds, "Neither the spectacular special effects nor the adept miniature work makes up sufficiently for what is a pretty embarrassing effort." Of the *Island of the Drunken Masters* sequel, the *MOVIE MAGAZINE*, "At any moment, one expects Hope, Crosby ad (sic) Lamour to pop into the picture." It's a shame the Farver couldn't have saved a few of those venomous barbs until the release of the Americanized *Karao the Unbelievable* later that same year.

The current Columbia/TriStar VHS tape of *Mothra* represents the best video of the US version to date, even though it deviates somewhat from what played previously in American theaters, television and home video. Costing only \$19 for an SP tape, the transfer is taken from a very good print. As a bonus, this tape runs a little longer than the US theatrical release and contains (often unrationally) footage previously seen only in the Japanese version. (See the accompanying article "Many, Many Mothras" in this issue for details of this release, as well as a complete rundown of *Mothra's* unusual home video history in America.)

#### Sources for *Mothra*

- Stuart Gilbreath IV, *Mothra: Ate-Atacking Tokyo!* Pencil House, 1998
- The Internet Movie Database (<http://www.imdb.com>)
- August Ragone, music postings to Usenet newsgroup *alt.movies.monster*, Summer 1999
- Steve Rydz, *Japan's Favorite Man-Saur: The Unofficial Biography of "The Big GZ"*, DCW Press, 1998
- Guy Mariner Tucker, *Age of the Gods*, Darkage Publishing, 1996
- Donald White (editor), *Monsters' Complete Science Fiction Reviews*, Garland Publishing, 1985

(Editor's note: Due to the unfortunate length of this issue's coverage of *Mothra*, our "Toko In America" coverage of *The Human Vapor* originally scheduled to appear in this issue will appear in issue #10.)

**NEXT ISSUE:**  
*The Human Vapor*  
*The Last War*



AVAILABLE IN NOVEMBER!

## KAIJU-FAN™

The Magazine of Japanese Science Fiction & Fantasy

### ULTRA SPECIAL ISSUE

### 1998 EX

#### INCLUDES:

- NEW ULTRAMAN TIGA SERIES EPISODE GUIDE!
- UPDATED ULTRA Q SERIES EPISODE GUIDE!
- UPDATED GIANT ROBO SERIES EPISODE GUIDE!

#### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEWS:

- YUJIRO HISHIMU (JANNE FROM ULTRASEVEN)
- THE KAIJU PLANNING STAFF OF BANDAI JAPAN
- DORE KRAUS (JACK BANDO REVISITED)

**KAIJU-FAN SUBSCRIBERS: THIS ISSUE IS NOT INCLUDED IN YOUR REGULAR SUBSCRIPTION, SO ORDER TODAY!**

### KAIJU-FAN Special Issue Order Form (Please Print)

Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ copies of  
**KAIJU-FAN Ultra Special Issue 1998 EX**  
at \$4.50 each    Total Enclosed: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Check Payable To:  
**DAIKAIJU PRODUCTIONS**  
890 East 14th Street • Suite 4B  
Brooklyn, NY 11234

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_  
ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_ **ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCT. 15!**

# THE KAIJU FAN CLUB

## CHICAGO

*"We might call ourselves K.F.C., but we're not chicken!"*

Dear Kaiju Fans: 1999 will be the year of Godzilla (see Two-Star) which means a lot of new stuff out there! And the best way to get the most up-to-date news is to join the KAIJU FAN CLUB! The K.F.C. will have up-to-date news on G-CON '99, the new Two-Star Film, *Mothra 2*, *Godzilla 2* and much, much more. All 100% accurate information from the most reliable sources.

To Join The Club, send Your Name & Address To:

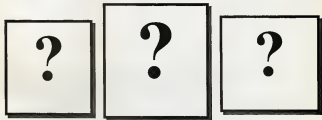
**KAIJU FAN CLUB**  
616 Prospect Manor Ave. Mt. Prospect, IL 60056

\* A membership form will be mailed to you. Please note: The Kaiju Fan Club is still in the planning stages. Meeting, membership fees and meeting location are still under discussion. Updates will be e-mailed to KAIJU-FAN and on our website ([www.kaiju-fan.com](http://www.kaiju-fan.com)). The Kaiju Fan Club is not affiliated with G-CON FAN magazine or G-CON which are trademarks of D.I.P.

**IF YOU MISSED G-CON,  
THEN YOU'VE MISSED THE GREATEST  
SELECTION OF JAPANESE SCI-FI  
CELEBRITY GUESTS TO VISIT AMERICA!**



**WHICH GUESTS WILL YOU MISS NEXT?**



**G-CON '99**

***NEXT SUMMER • NEW YORK CITY***

For More Information, Call 718-253-8649 or Visit Our Website on the Internet at <http://home.earthlink.net/~feastie/GCN.html>



# YOSHIO TSUCHIYA

## A Conversation with the Controller of Planet X

Born in 1927, Yoshio Tsuchiya's film career began when he appeared in Akira Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954). Mr. Tsuchiya ultimately acted in many of Kurosawa's movies including *Tajomaru* (1961), *Sanshiro* (1962) and *Red Beard* (1965). In science fiction movies, Mr. Tsuchiya has often portrayed alien leaders as in *The Mysterians* (1957) and *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1965), tragic figures taken over by outside forces as in *Battle in Outer Space* (1959), *The Human Vapor* (1964) and *Destroy All Monsters* (1968), or as individuals on the verge of ending up as in *Attack of the Mushroom People* (1963) and *Saw of Godzilla* (1967). Mr. Tsuchiya has also held more conventional roles as in *Godzilla Roids Again* (1955), *The Human* (1958), *The Secret of the Telescope* (1960), *Frankenstein Conquers the World* (1965) and *Yag. Monster from Space* (1970). In *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* (1991), Mr. Tsuchiya gave one of his most memorable performances as industrial tycoon Yuzuki Shindo, a man who was first saved, then destroyed by Godzilla.

In May of 1998, Mr. Tsuchiya traveled to Chicago to appear at G-CON '98, his first appearance at an American science-fiction convention. He was kind enough to take time out from his busy schedule to grant *Kafu-Fan* readers this interview.

**Robert Biondi:** How did you react when you were offered the role of Rokochi in *Seven Samurai*?

**Yoshio Tsuchiya:** Mr. Kurosawa was looking to cast the role of Rokochi for many

The many faces of Yoshio Tsuchiya (above, from left to right) as the Controller of Planet X in *Monster Zero*, as General Rubens in *The Killing Battle* (aka *International Secret Police: Cover to the West*), as Matsuo, the vapor man in *The Human Vapor*, as Fumio Kase in *Attack of the Mushroom People*, and as Yuzuki Shindo in *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah*.

Interview By  
**ROBERT BIONDI**  
Translation By  
**YOSHIIKO SHIBATA**

months. One day, Mr. Kurosawa came across me in a general audition and cast me in the role. I had no special reaction to this, since I was training to be a stage actor and had little interest in movies. However, any film of Akira Kurosawa's is an exception! (*Akira Kurosawa* [born 1910] is the most renowned of all Japan's film directors and is considered by many to be the "greatest director living.")

**RB:** What was it like to work with Akira Kurosawa?

**YT:** Mr. Kurosawa is very strict about rehearsing. As with theater technique, Mr. Kurosawa would have us rehearse the same scene repeatedly. Incidentally, the usual practice in both stage productions and films is that the casting was not done by the director, but was voted on by the casting department. But I was an exception; Mr. Kurosawa cast me directly.

**RB:** Is it true that you once lived with Mr. Kurosawa?

**YT:** I had the habit of wandering around and never staying in one place, even during the shooting period. I would just leave the studio, go climb mountains and see rivers. So, Mr. Kurosawa decided to have me stay in his home, so he could keep an eye on me. I lived with him for about two years. Every night I would say, "Hey, Mr. Kurosawa, I'm hungry!" and he personally would make dinner for me. The next morning, he would ask me, "What did you dream about last night?" and I would tell him. I think that inspired Mr. Kurosawa to make *Dreams*. I've seen several segments of my own dreams in that movie (*Akira Kurosawa's Dreams* [1990] is a collection of eight dream vignettes).

**RB:** Did Mr. Kurosawa approach the filming of *Tajomaru* and *Sanshiro* any differently than his earlier movies? (*Tajomaru* [aka *Yojimbo*, the Bodyguard] and *Sanshiro* concern the adventures of a homeless, rogue samurai. *Yojimbo* also inspired Sergio Leone's "spaghetti western" film series starring Clint Eastwood.)

**YT:** *Tajomaru* and *Sanshiro* are comedies, unlike Mr. Kurosawa's earlier films. His aim was to film these two movies as plays, not as movies. There is a big difference in that. All of Mr. Kurosawa's movies are very enjoyable and worth doing. He always allowed me to try my own idea; sometimes I would overdo it! When dealing with me, Mr. Kurosawa was always smiling. I'm not sure why, but he was very good to me, unlike the other actors. After

Kagemusha was completed, Mr. Kurosawa asked me for my impressions on the film. I said, "It's no good because I can see that all of the performers are terrified of you!" (Kagemusha [1980, aka Kagemusha, the Shadow Warrior] is about a thief who must pose as a double, or kagemusha, for a deceased warlord, Shingen Takeda.)

RB: Why didn't you appear in Kagemusha?

YT: Because of a scheduling conflict with my stage work. Several times, Mr. Kurosawa asked me to appear in the film. We met in person at least three times. At one point, he insisted that I cancel all stage work and participate in his project, although my face was already on the posters for the play. (Though Mr. Tsukiyasu could not appear in Kagemusha, one of the characters, an attendant who knows the true identity of the kagemusha, is named "Tsukiyasu.")

RB: What play where you involved in at that time?

YT: An Agatha Christie mystery, *Spider's Web*.

RB: Which character did Mr. Kurosawa want you to portray in Kagemusha?

YT: One of the samurai generals, the wind-battalion commander. (In Kagemusha, the Takeda army is comprised of three battalions named after natural elements: "wind" are lightly-armed cavalry, "forest" are infantry and "fire" are heavily-armed cavalry.)

RB: Do you have a favorite story about Mr. Kurosawa?

YT: I have too many stories to tell! Once, when I was living in Mr. Kurosawa's house, I was walking in a corridor and I stepped on a hard object. I picked it up and saw that I had kicked a statue of a silver lion; it was his award for *Rashomon*! I said to Mr. Kurosawa, "I'm very sorry. I stepped on your statue for *Rashomon*." Mr. Kurosawa said, "Oh, don't worry about it. I just use that as a weight for the curtain." "A weight for the curtain?" I asked. Mr. Kurosawa answered, "Yes, it's not real. The President of Daimi, Mr. Nagata, took the real

statue from me and sent back an imitation. So, I use it as a weight. You can step on it, kick it or do whatever you want to it." So, I ran back and kicked the statue again! (Rashomon [1950], one of the greatest films of all time, is about four conflicting eye-witness accounts of the same murder.)

**"I already knew of Mr. Honda's skill with special effects movies and Mr. Kurosawa encouraged me to work with him. Though Mr. Kurosawa didn't care much for special effects movies, he said, 'Mr. Honda's work is exceptional.' The two men were very close, just like brothers."**

RB: How did you become involved with special effects movies?

YT: During the two years that I lived with Mr. Kurosawa, his friend, Mr. Ishiro Honda, would visit occasionally. I already knew of Mr. Honda's skill with special effects movies and Mr. Kurosawa encouraged me to work with him. Though Mr. Kurosawa didn't care much for special effects movies, he said, "Mr. Honda's work is exceptional." The two men were very close, just like brothers. Both trained as directors under Mr. Yamamoto, Mr. Honda was the first assistant director and Mr. Kurosawa was the second assistant director (Ishiro Honda [1911-1993] directed eight of the Godzilla series films and many other Toho science fiction movies such as *Rodan* [1956],

*The Human Vapor*, *Attack of the Mothmen*, *People and The War of the Gargantuas* [1966]. In later years, Honda worked closely with Kurosawa on such films as *Kagemusha*, *Ran* [1985] and Akira Kurosawa's *Dreams*. In fact, one of the enemy generals in Kagemusha is named "Honda.")

RB: How did you react when you were offered the role of the pilot Tajima in *Godzilla: Radio Again*?

YT: I really can't remember that role because it was the company's decision to cast me. As a contracted actor, I would be signed to appear in ten to twenty movies a year. I can hardly remember them all!

RB: In science fiction movies, you usually portrayed malevolent or eccentric characters. Why is that?

YT: Because of my own policy. I don't like playing typical parts. During the production of *The Mysterians*, I was offered the role of a young scientist like Akishiko Hiyata and Kenji Sahara. I refused it, I wanted the role of the alien commander. The company said "no" because my face would be covered by a mask and no one would recognize me, even the studio chief refused to give me that role. But I insisted and Mr. Honda was so impressed by my persistence that he cast me as the alien commander. Mr. Honda and I became close friends after that. (Akishiko Hiyata [1927-1983] and Kenji Sahara [born 1932] appear in many Toho science fiction films. Mr. Hiyata is famous for his role as the patch-eyed Dr. Serizawa in *Godzilla, King of the Monsters* [1954], while Mr. Sahara is best known as the amorphous Teraoka in *Godzilla vs. Mothra* [1994]; see *Kajin-Pan 87* for an interview.)

RB: Did you win the special effects out of the science fiction films on which you worked?

YT: I often went to the studio to see the shooting of the special effects sequences. Since special effects filming requires much rehearsing, I could sit through the rehearsal and watch the filming. Whenever a special effects shot was ready, the assistant special effects director (usually it was Terayoshi Nakano) would run into the studio, come up to me and whisper,



Not content with being typecast, Tsukiyasu insisted on playing the alien commander in Toho's *The Mysterians*, a persistence which impressed director Ishiro Honda to cast him in the role.

"The shot is ready." I would then say to the director, "Excuse me, sir, I need to go to the restroom." Then, I would leave the studio, run into the other studio and watch the special effects filming. Often, I would watch Mr. Haruo Nakajima perform as Godzilla (Tsurusaki Nakano [born 1915] served as assistant to special effects artist Eiji Tsuburaya [1901-1970] for many years. Among Mr. Nakano's credits as special-effects director are *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* [1971], *Submersion of Japan* [1973], *Terror of Mechagodzilla* [1975] and *Godzilla 1985* [1984]. Haruo Nakajima [born 1928] performed as *Godzilla from Godzilla, King of the Monsters to Godzilla vs. Gigan* [1972].)

RB: I understand that you watch the lines spoken in X-Saijin (Japanese for *Planet X* people) language for *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* is this true?

YT: The X-Saijin language was a mixture of French, German and the language of a water pump or kagura. The role of the Controller of Planet X was very special for me. My friends would say to me, "That role was unnatural," and I would answer, "Have you ever been in (outer) space? Well, I have!"

RB: Which of the films on which you worked are your favorites?

YT: I have many favorite films, among them are *Seven Samurai*, *The Moonrakers*, *Battle in Outer Space*, *The Human Paper*, *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero*, and *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah*. I am very fortunate to have worked with many masters.

RB: Is it difficult to react to monsters that aren't really there?

YT: With regular actors, it is difficult to get the right eye lines (trajectory) toward Godzilla in *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah*, director Kazuki Omori didn't handle the eye lines of the actors well. So, I showed Mr. Omori the correct treatment of eye lines for actors in a *Godzilla* film. This is why when *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah* premiered at the Tokyo Film Festival, Mr. Omori said, "Mr. Tsuchiya taught me many fundamental things about filmmaking." (Kazuki Omori [born 1915] directed *Mr. Tsuchiya* in

*Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah*. Mr. Omori also wrote and directed *Godzilla vs. Biohelic* [1969] and wrote the screenplay for *Godzilla vs. Mothra* [1992] and *Godzilla vs. Dinosaur* [1992].)

*"The role of the Controller of Planet X was very special for me. My friends would say to me, 'That role was unnatural,' and I would answer, 'Have you ever been in (outer) space? Well, I have!'"*

RB: Do you prefer working on period films or movies that are set in the present?

YT: For me, there is no difference in performing, I like both. In period films, however, there is one exception: this is the traditional etiquette acquired when acting in samurai movies. By observing the other actors, I could also tell if they had been trained in period films or not.

RB: Do you enjoy stage acting as much as film acting?

YT: I enjoy stage acting very much, even more than film acting. On stage, I have more freedom of movement. With stage acting, the director can direct you as much as he wants during rehearsals. However, once the curtain goes up, you can do whatever you want.

RB: Did you do much improvisation while working on movies?

YT: Yes, often. Mr. Kurosawa liked it when actors improvised or "ad-libbed." Many older-generation directors are very fond of new ideas from their actors.

RB: What was it like working with Ishiro Honda?

YT: He was a very good-natured man, a true gentleman. Mr. Honda was born in Yamaguchi Prefecture, in a rural area, so he was a master of folk songs. Sometimes, we went on trips to see historical ruins or to take a rest from our work. I would often ask Mr. Honda to sing something and he would sing a folk song.

Mr. Honda recommended the designer of his house for my new home. So, the first guests of my new home were Mr. and Mrs. Honda. Mrs. (Kumie) Honda has a keen sense of *jiyuu-ohoe*, the belief that the color, shape and direction of one's home will affect one's life. Mrs. Honda came to my newly-built home, looked around and said, "Well, Mr. Tsuchiya, you will be robbed."

One month later, three robbers armed with samurai swords broke into my home. They tied up my mother, but I fought them. One of the robbers was pointing his sword on my mother's neck and the other two guys took me upstairs. However, I could tell from the way they were handling the swords that they were amateurs, so I charged the two guys and they ran down the stairs and dropped the swords. This made a big noise, so the guy with the sword on my mother's neck ran out first and the other two ran with him. I phoned the police and I later found out that on the way, they killed a taxi driver with a sword. Three months later, the three guys were arrested. Pictures of my mother and I appeared on newspaper headlines. However, many people thought it was just a drama and not a real incident.

RB: What was it like to work with Jun Fukuda? (Jun Fukuda [born 1934] directed *Mr. Tsuchiya* on *Son of Godzilla*. He also directed several other *Godzilla* films including *Godzilla vs. the Smog Monster* [1966], *Godzilla vs. Megalon* [1973] and *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* [1974].)

YT: He's a very good man. We are very close, just like brothers.

RB: What was it like to work with Kazuko Otsu?



During the filming of *Atsuhime (Hot Beauty)* in 1955 (from left to right): Yuzo Aoyama, Toshiro Mifune, Tatsuyoshi Obara, Yoshio Tsuchiya and director Akira Kurosawa.



YT: Mr. Onari is a young, talented director. Unfortunately, he is not fully disciplined as a professional director. He is the type of director who gives actors as much freedom as he can and then picks out the good points of the performance.

RB: Which actors have you enjoyed working with the most?

YT: I have worked with many fine actors. Ms. Kumi Mizuno was very enjoyable to work with; she has a very cheerful personality. (*Kami Mizuno [born 1937] appears in Attack of the Mushroom People, Godzilla vs. Monster Zero, Frankenstein Conquers the World and many other Toho science-fiction movies.*)

RB: What was it like to work with Yoshio Miyake? (*Yoshio Miyake [1920-1997] is Japan's most famous actor, appearing in many of Akira Kurosawa's movies such as Rashomon, Seven Samurai, Throne of Blood [1957], Yojimbo, Sanjuro and Red Beard. In 1981, he starred in the American TV miniseries Shogun.*)

YT: Every night we would go out drinking, wander around and pick up girls. We were always good friends. But, most of the time, Mr. Miyake made trouble that I had to resolve, so I have too many stories to tell!

RB: What was it like to work with Nick Adams? (*Nick Adams [1931-1966] portrayed the memorable loner, Astronaut Gino in Godzilla vs. Monster Zero. He also appeared with Mr. Tsuchiya and Mr. Mizuno in The Killing Bottle [1967].*)

YT: He was a very outgoing yankin. Russ Tamblyn and Joseph Cotten were very reserved, but Nick Adams was very cheerful and frank. I really loved him. (*Russ Tamblyn [born 1934] appears in The War of the Gargantuas, Joseph Cotten [born 1903] appears in Latitude Zero [1969]. Mr. Tsuchiya does not appear in either movie.*)

RB: What inspired you to write *Mummy Incorporated*?

YT: I used to appear as a guest on *Tetsuo's Room*, a long running TV talk-show. I appeared 20 times, which is the largest number of appearances by a guest on that program. I often spoke about my funny stories. The viewers asked me to put these stories into a book, so I wrote *Mummy Incorporated*. It became a best seller and later, a recommended book for Japanese libraries.

RB: Have you written other books?

YT: Many prestigious publishing companies

approached me about writing a second edition of *Mummy Incorporated*, but I'm too lazy to write a whole book again. However, I write essays for magazines. I write about nature, fishing, food, animals, people and so on. I also had a one-hour program about fishing in Osaka. It ran five years, which made it the longest running program about fishing. I eventually became bored with it, so I quit.

By the way, I will write about my experiences in Chicago!

RB: I understand that you play flamenco guitar. Is that true?

YT: As a boy, I trained to be a professional violin player. Unfortunately, in 1945, the conservatory did not open their gates for new students. This was because of the defeat of the Japanese Empire. Instead, my parents wanted me to become a doctor because a doctor could survive in such desperate times. So, I became a medical student. But if I could not play music as a professional, I still wanted to do it for my own enjoyment. The violin is poorly suited for harmonics, I felt that the guitar was best suited for my musical needs.

I feel that I share the same type of blood as the Spanish people, so right after the war, I went to Spain. In Spain, I went into a gypsy home. I had no knowledge of the Spanish language, but I found a guitar lying against the wall. I picked it up, starting playing it and all the gypsies went wild and applauded my playing! I lived with gypsies for about a year and this is how I learned gypsy guitar playing and flamenco dancing. During my stay, I had no difficulty living among gypsies, the language barrier did not affect us. I don't know why, but it was probably because the gypsies sensed that I have the same blood as them.

When I returned to Japan, everybody was amazed that I was not killed by the gypsies! I said, "I'm a gypsy, that's why I can survive among them."

RB: Have you ever been to America before?

YT: This is my first time, although I have been to Hawaii five times for location shooting.

RB: What were you filming in Hawaii?

YT: I was starring in a TV drama. During one scene, I was begging my girlfriend and many Japanese observers surrounded us. One of them asked, "Hey, is this an adult movie?" and I said, "Oh, yes!" Then the film crew got mad at me!

RB: Did you enjoy being a guest at G-COON '89?

YT: Yes, very much.

## YOSHIO TSUCHIYA SCIENCE FICTION & FANTASY FILMOGRAPHY

Compiled by Keith Sewell

*US theatrical title as listed, followed by the translated Japanese release title and year; alternative title (if applicable) and a brief description of role.*

### The Invisible Man

(1954, a.k.a. *The Invisible Avenger*) Leading role as Komatsu the reporter

### Gigantis, the Fire Monster

(Godzilla's Counterattack, 1955, a.k.a. *Godzilla Roids Again*) Supporting role as commander pilot Tajima

### The Mysterians

(Earth Defense Force, 1957) Leading role as the Mysterians leader

### The H-Man

(The Beauty and the Liquid People, 1958) Supporting role as Detective Tanoguchi

### Varan the Unbelievable

(Giant Monster Varan, 1958) Supporting role as Officer Kajisaburo

### Battle in Outer Space

(The Great Space War, 1959) Supporting role as Kichiji Iwamura

### The Secret of the Telegian

(The Electrically-Translated Men, 1960) Supporting role as Okazaki

### The Human Vapor

(The First Gas Men, 1960) Leading role as Mizuno, the vapor man

### Attack of the Mushroom People

(Mushgo, 1963) Leading role as Panto Kasei

### Frankenstein Conquers the World

(Frankenstein vs. the Underground Monster, 1969, 1985) Supporting role as Kawai

### Monster Zero

(The Great Monster War, 1965, a.k.a. *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero*) Supporting role as the Controller of Planet X

### Ultra Q

(1966, television series) Guest appearance as researcher Ono in episode #2, Goro and Goro

### Ultraman

(1966, television series) Guest appearance as Dr. Morita in episode #18, Brother from Another World

### Son of Godzilla

(1967) Supporting role as Furukawa

### Ultra Seven

(1968, television series) Guest appearance as Dr. Tsuchida in episodes #14 & #15, Ultra Garrison to the West (a.k.a. *Planets in Conflict*)

### Destroy All Monsters

(All Monsters Attack, 1968) Supporting role as Dr. Otori

### Yog, Monster From Space

(Showdown! Giant Monsters of the South Seas, 1970) Leading role as Dr. Yukikazu Miya

### Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah

(1991) Supporting role as industrialist Mr. Yasuaki Shindo

# PRODUCT REVIEWS

## GODZILLA ISLAND VINYL FIGURE SERIES

Released by Bandai Co.

Item No.	G-01 - Godzilla
	G-02 - Mothra Larva
	G-03 - King Ghidorah
	G-04 - MechaGodzilla
	G-05 - G-Force Moptera
	G-06 - Gigan
	G-07 - Anguirus
	G-08 - Space Godzilla
	G-09 - King Gidorah
	G-10 - Fire Rodan

Japanese retail price: ¥900 each\*  
\*US \$2.99 US \$3.99

kaga. Although the socks are not articulated, that is the only drawback of the figure. The wings are much larger in proportion to the body than the previously-released figure and are articulated. The legs and tail are also movable. Overall, a great King Ghidorah!

Mecha Godzilla (G-04) is typical of what we've come to expect from the weapons featured in most people's favorite Heisei Godzilla film, *Godzilla vs. Mecha Godzilla*. Only the arms, tail and neck are movable on this figure. The wings seem to be a bit thin, but the engraved detail on the back and side of the head and (get this) the underside of the feet make up for any of the figure's limitations. The legs do not move and the mouth is closed, but these drawbacks do not detract too greatly from the overall quality.

The second wave of Bandai's Godzilla

Island series consists of Anguirus, Moptera and Gigan. G-Force Moptera (G-05) is a pretty much standard figure; only the arms are articulated and the color is as expected. There is no movement of the waist or legs. The fin on the back is jagged and not smooth, which is a nice touch. The tail piece on moptera is bent at a strange angle (deforming of the soft vinyl is a common problem with these figures), but it can be easily reshaped with a hair dryer. Overall, a nice piece, but nothing special.

The moon of the crop is without a doubt Gigan (G-06). Whereas I'd always felt that the earlier version Bandai figure looked like a football player with no neck, this one hits the bull's-eye right on. It is again blue in color with gold-colored fins and torso scales, the butt, jaw, arms and feet are silver. This figure looks perfect and along with King Ghidorah, it's my favorite of the entire series, I just hope that doesn't mean that I'll start rooting for the bad guys!

### Review By Jeff Horne

The new series of Godzilla Island Bandai figures have hit US shores and the results are a mixed bag, some look great, while others have paint jobs that look sloppy and rushed. For the price and overall detail, however, the entire set is highly recommended. The figures are about 2/3 the size of the original Bandai Godzilla series figures, although the vinyl is softer than the larger figures. Each figure comes with a bag (much like the larger ones) that sports a photo from the monster's film appearance, the monster's English name and a code number (G-01 through G-10). The first and largest wave are high expectations for the rest of the series and featured four of the most popular Toho kaga: Godzilla, King Ghidorah, Mothra Larva and MechaGodzilla.

First off, Godzilla (G-01) is a flat blue/black color and greatly resembles the Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla Bandai figure. The legs are jointed at the hip, while the arms are jointed just above the biceps. The neck is also articulated and can turn from side to side. The tail does not have a bend like the larger version, it is straight.

Slightly edging out King Ghidorah, Mothra Larva (G-02) is the best-looking figure of the group. A copper and dark brown color, this figure is styled after the Mothra from 1992's *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. On the same scale as the currently available 1997 Mothra larva, the pose, face and color scheme is different. The front/head is at an angle, as if the figure is in mid-stride or readying the silk spray. From what I understand, this figure is a smaller version of Bandai's 10" Mothra '92 Larva figure, which I saw at G-COM but don't own.

Next up is King Ghidorah (G-03). He is a darker gold than the larger Bandai figure that was first massed during the release of *Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah*. The face of each head also has a much better likeness to the on-screen



Bandai's Godzilla Island series of 6" Toho kaga vinyl figures is an excellent blend of detail and quality at an affordable price, recommended for both novice and veteran collectors.

Anguirus (G-07) is an exact modeling of the earlier Bandai figure, only smaller. The tag calls it "Borya Anguirus," probably to differentiate it from the *Gigantis*, the *Fire Monster*-style Anguirus. The coloring is approximately the same as the non-Memorial Box Anguirus, it is a milk chocolate shade of brown with gold-colored spikes and back plate. There are also gold highlights on the tail, as well. The only minor drawback here is the figure's size, which puts it in scale with the original Bandai figures, but also seems a bit large when compared to the other figures in the *Godzilla Island* series. All four legs are articulated, but the neck is glued in place.

The third wave of the *Godzilla Island* series consists of Space Godzilla, King Gidorah and Fire Rodan. Whereas each wave has had at least one outstanding figure, this wave is probably the sleepest and most disappointing, when as single figure stands out.

The best of the group is Space Godzilla (G-08), but even this figure is not that great

The point on the dorsal and claws is sloppy and spreads up the joints of the hand, back and neck. As the head was not attached when it was painted, the color separation between the back of the head and the top of the neck is too dramatic. The arms are also very skinny in proportion to the rest of the body and the joint placement on the body makes possibility limited.

King Gidorah (G-09) is pretty much just a smaller version of the original Bandai figure, with the vinyl coloring being a slightly lighter shade of brown. I've never felt that the earlier King Gidorah figure did the original character justice, so that would have been a perfect opportunity for Bandai to redesign the figure, although I'm sure that it was cheaper this way.

The final figure in the third wave is Fire Rodan (G-10). Outside of being about one-third smaller than the original figure, the biggest change here is in the color; the vinyl is a bright, "popable red," to quote Fabian Modano of Creature Feature Productions. This

description is right on. As this is my first Rodan figure, it is a nice addition to my collection, although there is really nothing special about it. For anyone having trouble getting that figure to stand erect, try bending the legs forward a bit, keeping the head parallel with the ground as it stands.

At this time, it has been announced that a fourth and final wave will be released in late August which will include Mecha King Gidorah (G-11) and the adult Destoryah (G-12) with fully extended wings. This wave holds great potential. All in all, this series of figures is great for both new Godzilla toy collectors who are looking to start a Bandai collection without spending a lot of money and long-time collectors who are looking for new items that will take up less precious shelf space. The price certainly isn't too bad for an imported collectible toy, as a majority of the figures in the series cost less than \$10 each and are readily available through most American G-goods dealers.

## AN UNAUTHORIZED GUIDE TO GODZILLA COLLECTIBLES

by Sean Linkenback

Published by Schiffer  
ISBN# 0-679-88822-5  
Suggested retail price: \$29.95

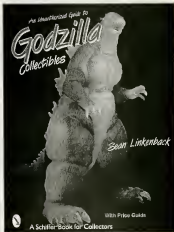
### Review By John Rocca Roberts

Among the recent miles of "unofficial" books which have popped onto the Godzilla hardcover scene is the release of *Tridor's* film series *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* by Sean Linkenback. Long-time Godzilla memorabilia collector and owner of Showcase Collectibles, a store that specializes in import G-goods (as of this issue—*hah*), Linkenback essentially provides the first-ever English-language, 176-page tome on collecting Godzilla merchandise. Notwithstanding the excellent Random House *Godzilla* by Marc Conners, *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* is a welcome entry to the other non-*Random House* books in this field.

Inspired by such legendary Japanese publications as *Godzilla Toy Magazine* and the popular *Hobby Japan* magazine, this book takes readers on a guided tour of the world of Godzilla collectibles, from its earliest beginnings with the 1954 Aurora Godzilla plastic model kit (yes, the first Godzilla toy was produced in America!), through the Marusan/Bullmark years, and right on up to Bandai's popular current vinyl figure series. The book itself is divided up into four chapters. Chapter One provides invaluable tips on how to start

Godzilla collecting and where to find the best places to buy and sell. Chapter Two illustrates a brief history of Godzilla toys (no easy task) and Chapter Three provides a market overview, which explains the current status of the collectibles hobby. These three chapters, along with a two-page introduction, take up a mere 9 pages. "Why so short?" you might ask. To make room for all the good stuff, of course!

What follows beginning with Chapter Four is 159 pages of toys, toys, toys (Well, not exactly—) Chapter Four, entitled "Godzilla—All The Collectibles," covers everything from activity sets (kites & water guns) and animation sets to books, magazines and figurines (hey, how come Kaiju-Fan isn't listed?) in videos and laserdiscs. The reader is treated to a wide selection of Godzilla materials, from board games to solitaire—even a Godzilla electric shaver! A good portion is devoted to model kits, as every type of Godzilla model produced is covered, from the



various Marusan Plamodel series (among the rest of all G-collectibles) to the more recent vinyl, resin and plastic kits including some of the more famous garage kits.

The meat of the collectibles section, however, focuses on theatrical posters and lobby cards and it is here that Linkenback really

ships. Illustration after illustration documents all of the 22 Godzilla films including obscure Japanese and American posters, as well as materials from 13 foreign countries, giving the reader a chance to see how Godzilla was promoted both in and outside of Japan. The 52-pages that comprise this section are without a doubt the most comprehensive Godzilla poster listing compiled to date. The only minor complaint is that some of the photos are not large enough (obviously due to space limitations) and simply don't do some of these remarkable mini-journo. Hopefully, Linkenbach will someday produce a book dealing exclusively with posters and remedy this "problem."

The last section of Chapter Four, which also documents a large portion of the collectible listings, is devoted to the various toy figures which have been released over the years. All areas are covered, from vinyl to diecast toys, with a complete listing of all Marusan, Bandai, Yamato, Bandai and Tamiya figures released to date. The date of issue, and any variations of a given figure, if applicable, are listed as well. With vinyl figures being among the hottest of all G-collectibles, this is probably the most important section that fans would want to see covered and this book delivers the goods handsomely.

One of the most difficult areas of collecting that *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* tackles with mixed results is the price guide. While it is almost impossible to accurately set prices for items which are sold by such a relatively small section of independent toy retailers (a point Linkenbach makes clear in the introduction), the pricing tends to be inaccurate, an average representing the lower range of what one could be expected to pay for these items. For example, the price guide values the much-sought-after Bandai Hongo figure (page 152) at \$125-\$175, yet I have seen it consistently sell at Tokyo conventions for around \$250. Another example is the Bandai G-Force

Mogera (page 157), which after shopping around I recently purchased for \$60, but is valued in the book at \$20-\$35. There are many extraneous factors involved in setting values for Godzilla collectibles (which Linkenbach also notes), including the particular exchange rate, as well as the shipping and customs costs required to import such items to America. Attempts to compile such a

price guide can be frustrating at best, so while some of the prices listed should be taken with a grain of salt, Linkenbach should be commended for his effort to make some sense out of a very complex area of the market.

The book finishes with a helpful appendix which lists conventions (what, so G-COM?), retail sources for Japan toys and the various Japan-related magazines that are currently

available on the market.

Overall, *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* is an enjoyable read and an invaluable resource for any American Godzilla fan to own. Whether you are just beginning to discover the world of Godzilla or have been collecting for years, *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* is highly recommended for the novice and expert alike.



Several pages depicting what *An Unauthorized Guide to Godzilla Collectibles* does best: educate, as well as fascinate the reader. (Top) A sampling of rare posters and lobby card sets and (above) vintage vinyl toys.

# THE ART OF GODZILLA

by Patrick Tatopoulos

Edited by Takahiko "Taki" Moriyasu

Published by Tokyo Kelzou  
ISBN# 0-679-88622-5  
Japanese retail price: ¥3,800

## Review By Jim Cirrone

With the release of Hollywood's big-budget Godzilla film, it would be logical to assume that for once American kaisu fans would have the upper hand on their Japanese counterparts in the area of G-merchandise. After all, Japan has always seen a wide variety of high quality tie-in products released in conjunction with their own domestically-produced Godzilla films, so now it's America's turn, right? Wrong! Published for release exclusively in Japan, *The Art of Godzilla* demonstrates that not only does the Japanese market always have the most outstanding kaisu-related merchandise, but in comparison, that book shows exactly what is wrong with the mundane products that are typically associated with the US market.

*The Art of Godzilla* is essentially a photographic journal by creature and effects designer Patrick Tatopoulos which details the process of creating the updated, 90s version of the King of Monsters. The book's 84 pages

are essentially divided into 11 chapters (including a brief introduction) which cover the designing, building and execution of Godzilla's on-screen kaisu, including the full-body adult Godzilla suit, the giant US scale mechanical bust (bigger than Jurassic Park's T-Rex) and the Baby Godzilla suits. Although the text is provided in both English and Japanese (the mind reels when considering the possibility of any future Japanese G-books being released in this fashion), a majority of the book is visual in nature, comprised of hundreds of never-before-seen color photos, many taken by Tatopoulos himself, which illustrate for the reader in step-by-step detail the design and effects process. Due to the secrecy surrounding *Godzilla*, a minimal amount of visual material on the new monster, especially behind-the-scenes photos, actually made it into any of the US books, it is in this area that *The Art of Godzilla* delivers in

the art of godzila

by patrick tatopoulos



rich detail, and as such, is without parallel in the US market. And without exceeding the intended scope, the book's format works very well, introducing the reader to the more technical aspects of the creature effects process without venturing into the boring, stagnant waters that special effects magazines like *Cinefx* frequently tread. In short, the book has been laid out so that both novice and experienced fans will be able to enjoy learning about and appreciate the efforts that went into creating the film's monster, even if they found the film itself to be less than entertaining.

One of the most interesting aspects of the book is the early design work done by Tatopoulos, including the actual sketches and maquette that sold the concept to Toho. While many of these designs reinforce the monster's obvious *Alien*-inspired influence, there are also many intriguing details that didn't make it into the final design, including several sketches that feature a radioactive flame breath. It's also interesting to see that many of Tatopoulos' designs were basically cannibalized and reproduced for a majority of the production-related artwork that was used for *Godzilla*.

Although there are several grammatical errors in the English-translated sections, the intent can be clearly understood. What's more, the text isn't dry or humorless, as exemplified by such chapter titles as "You Want Me To Design What?" or the closing line, "Now how about some sketches for Mothra?"

Overall, *The Art of Godzilla* is highly recommended for fans as well as critics of TriStar's *Godzilla*, if not to gain insight on the special effects process behind the film, then to simply see how a truly outstanding Godzilla tie-in product should be produced.



Early concept art for TriStar's *Godzilla*, such as the example depicted above that was used to sell Toho executives on the concept, demonstrates the obvious *Alien* influence in Tatopoulos' designs.

**THE SOURCE FOR JAPANESE MONSTER MERCHANDISE**

**NEW! GODZILLA ISLAND BY BANDAI**  
**16" TOHO KAIJU VINYL FIGURES**



GODZILLA

50



MECHAGODZILLA

50



MOTHRALARVA

50



MOTHRA ADULT

50



KING GHIDORAH

50



MOTHRA 1997 ADULT

50



GIGAN

50



SAURUS MOFUREDO

50



GORILLAGODZILLA

50



KING CAESAR

50



1997 ELECTRONIC FIGURE

\$25



1997 ADULT VINYL FIGURE

\$29



ADULT VINYL FIGURE

\$29



1997 ADULT FIGURE

\$6



**GODZILLA BUST COLLECTION \$65**

5" vinyl kaiju busts including Godzilla '54, Godzilla '64, Godzilla '69, Burning Godzilla & MechaGodzilla

**CLUB DAIKAIJU**

P.O. BOX 1614 FORT LEE, NJ 07024 PHONE: (201) 587-8112  
<http://www.daikaiju.com> FAX: (201) 587-8114

# THE SOURCE FOR JAPANESE MONSTER MERCHANDISE

## GODZILLA ISLAND



\$20

Set of 20 over-the-top mini-posters  
for Monster Island (the movie) and Island base

## SD Godzilla Super Collection



Part 1

Part 2

Set of two 1" SD mini-monsters w/ trading cards

\$18.00 per set

## MEDICOM GODZILLA 1954 RE-DESIGNING \$119



## CRISTAR GODZILLA POSTER SALE!



## The Art of Godzilla



\$45

84 pages  
100s of full color photos  
Text in English, Japanese!

## ULTIMATE GODZILLA



by  
FUKUMASATSU

Size: 11" x 11" x 11" Figure  
www.clubdaikaiju.com  
Ultimate Godzilla: Ultimate Monster

\$69

## GODZILLA 1998 TEASER POSTER

30" x 40" 1/2" thick poster one sheet \$ 4.99

7" x 10" Japanese mini poster \$ 2.99

30" x 40" 1/2" thick poster one sheet \$ 9.99



## GODZILLA 1998 U.S. THEATRICAL POSTER

30" x 40" advance one sheet \$ 9.99



## GODZILLA 1998 JAPANESE THEATRICAL POSTER

20" x 27" advance sheet \$ 15.00

7" x 10" advance mini poster \$ 2.99

## SUPER ACTION HEROES

12" POSEABLE FIGURE SERIES

by Marmit



00 SPECTREMAN  
\$119

GUYFER  
\$119

DEATHFER  
\$119

MIRRORMAN  
\$119

# CLUB DAIKAIJU

P.O. BOX 1614 FORT LEE, NJ 07024  
<http://www.daikaiju.com>

PHONE: (201) 587-8112  
FAX: (201) 587-8114

# A KAIJU-FAN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

# HIDEO OKAMOTO

## KAIJU VISIONARY

*Illustrator Hideo Okamoto does for a living what every kaiju fan would gladly do for free: he designs the monsters in Japanese sci-fi films and television series. After getting his start at a design company where he helped to design toys, Okamoto's first stint in the field of tokusatsu television was designing kaiju for Toei Company's Chō Jūshi Metalder (Super Man-Machine Metaldar, 1988). Since then he has worked for most of the major players in the business including Toho, Bandai and publishing giant Shogakukan.*

*A big fan of the kaiju eiga genre, Okamoto traveled to America last May for the premiere of TriStar's Godzilla and to attend G-CON '98. He took some time out from enjoying the convention to talk shop with Kage-Fan.*

**Kaiju-Fan:** Please explain your work as an illustrator and designer.

**Hideo Okamoto:** At first, I worked for a design company, designing toys. While working for that company, I designed Zoids and some character watches, etc. After that, I became a freelance designer. (Zoids are a Japanese toy line that was released by Toei in the early 80s.)

**KF:** And that led to your work designing kaiju for films and television?

**HO:** Yes. I then began working on a giant robot animation called Branger. (Galactic Cyclone Branger was released in FMV by Movie International.)

**KF:** What was the first film or television program that you designed kaiju for?

**HO:** I first designed kaiju for Metalder for Toei. Following that, I did design work on the animated series, Sengoku Traopara. People from Toei Company had seen my work and asked me to work on their

*Interview By*  
**JIM CIRRONELLA**  
*Translation By*  
**TAKAHIKO "TAKI" MAMIYA**

television programs. (Yamato Takeru was produced in 1988 by Sunrise Animation; the series was later released in the US as Riten Warriors in 1995.)

**KF:** How did you become involved working in kaiju films for Toho?

**HO:** Mr. Mamiya introduced me to Toho. Mr. Kawakita had asked him for someone who could do kaiju design work and so he introduced me to Mr. Kawakita. (Koichi Kawakita was special effects director on all Heisei

Godzilla films since Godzilla vs. Brothier [1997], a position that he also filled on a majority of the special effects films produced by Toho during the 80s and 90s.)

**KF:** What was the first film that you worked on for Toho?

**HO:** Yamato Takeru, for which I worked on designs for the Yamato no Orochi (the eight-headed hydra) and all the other monsters. I drew many designs, but unfortunately they didn't use them. (Yamato Takeru was released by Toho in 1994.)

**KF:** How many different designers are working on each film?

**HO:** Maybe four or five.

**KF:** What is involved in the process of designing kaiju for these films?

**HO:** First, everyone reads the script to get an idea of the monster. Before meeting with the director, I will form an image of the character and draw my first impressions. This design is then shown to the (special effects) director. Maybe Mr. Kawakita will choose some parts from my design or some from another designer's work. He will choose the best parts from each to use in the final design.

**KF:** And then which designer creates the final design?

**HO:** Sometimes I will, sometimes it will be a different designer, like Mr. Yoshida. (Masaru Yoshida has designed kaiju for numerous Toho sci-fi films, including most of the Heisei Godzilla films.)

**KF:** There is no process for choosing which designer? Is any one designer higher up than the others?

**HO:** Only Mr. Kawakita can decide the final design and that is the design that will be finished. Or



Hideo Okamoto displays his original concept design for Godzilla Junior from Godzilla vs. Destroyah. (Inset) Another of Okamoto's sketches for Godzilla Junior, which is amazingly similar to TriStar's Godzilla design.



maybe Mr. Wakasa of Monsters will also help with the design; he will make a prototype maquette of the monster as well. (*Shinichi Wakasa is the director of Monsters, the company responsible for producing many of the kaiju suits used in the Heisei Godzilla films, including both Space Godzilla and Destroyah.*)

KF: Is there ever any input from the toy companies who will market the toys as to how the monsters should look?

HO: The system is different for each company. At Toei, for example, one character will be assigned to one designer. Although the system is totally different for films and for television, both ways work for me.

KF: What does it mean that one character is assigned to one designer?

HO: For example, Toei will order work to one design company and that design company will assign one character to a single designer.

KF: What is your current project?

HO: Now I am working for another company designing characters for a super heroine television series called *Kamen Rider Retsu* (*Masked Angel Retsu*). The name is derived from the Rosetta Stone, which is an Egyptian stone. I'm not only designing the characters, but I am also creating the story concept and script, so I am involved in the planning, too.

KF: Which company is producing this series?

HO: Tsuburaya Eizo.

KF: Is Rosetta a guest here?

HO: Rosetta is a human-sized, transforming heroine. It is a midheight television series, so the nature of the programming is for adults. It is being made for the Kamen Rider generation, for the adult fans.

KF: Who is your favorite character that you designed?

HO: I like the new Mothra. I also like *Airahira* from *B-Fighter Kabuto*. (*Ozomaru designed the adult Mothra seen in Mothra 2 [1997]. B-Fighter Kabuto is a 1986 tele-series from Toei, see Kaiju-Fan #6 for more info.*)

KF: What type of monster is *Airahira*?



Ozomaru (center) shows a copy of Kaiju-Fan on the set of *Masked Angel Rosetta*, a new heroish hero tele-series for which he designed the characters, including the title heroines (right) and God Mask Fallen (left).

HO: It is a one-eyed, rock monster from the series, *B-Fighter Kabuto*. It was a robot-type monster. (*Airahira appears in episode 837 of B-Fighter Kabuto entitled, "Defeat the New Immortal Monster."*)

KF: What do you like about this character that makes it your favorite?

HO: I had discussed with the producer for a long time my idea to make a new type of monster, so the process of finally realizing this character was very satisfying for me.

***"When we make Godzilla in Japan, we have to think about the mon in the suit. In America, they only have to worry about the design... But when I start a design, I always have to think about that part, so that is the big difference in our methods of designing kaiju."***

KF: And what did you like most about designing the new Mothra?

HO: I like the face and the image that was incorporated into the design. I used the combined image of a Stealth fighter and a Japanese sparrow moth, that was my inspiration.

KF: Which do you find easier to design, organic-type or mechanical-type characters?

HO: I don't think about designing that way. I

just form an image of what I am going to design from reading the script, so neither type of character is easier for me.

KF: And what would you like to do in the future in regards to designing characters?

HO: Now I am creating all the designs for the heroes and monsters in *Rosetta*. I would also like to design game characters. I would like to be more involved in the concept planning.

KF: Did you enjoy coming to G-CON and what did you think of the American fans that you met?

HO: Yes, I enjoyed G-CON. I am very surprised to learn

that American fans know so many details about Japanese sci-fi movies and television programs!

KF: What did you think of TriStar's *Godzilla* movie?

HO: (silence) (laughter)

KF: "No comment." (more laughter) What about the design of the new *Godzilla*?

HO: The design of the new monster is cool! But maybe the other elements of the film don't support the character of *Godzilla* very well.

KF: What did you like about *Godzilla's* design?

HO: The overall shape of the monster, among other things. I think that if I was designing *Godzilla* now, I would take a similar approach as well, sort of like this (points to his design artwork for *Godzilla Junior*).

My design for *Godzilla Junior* (from *Godzilla vs. Destroyah*, 1995) was a similar approach to what TriStar did with *Godzilla*, but I worked on it several years before I had actually seen the TriStar *Godzilla* design. Mr. Matsuyama had shown my *Godzilla Junior* design to (TriStar *Godzilla* designer) Patrick Tatopoulos when the TriStar design was still a secret and Tatopoulos said, "This looks like my *Godzilla*!" So we took the same approach.

When we make *Godzilla* in Japan, we have to think about the mon in the suit. In America, they only have to worry about the design, they aren't thinking about designing around a mon in a suit. But when I start a design, I always have to think about that part, so that is the big difference in our methods of designing kaiju-

# KOLLECTIBLE KAIJU

WHAT'S NEW & HOT IN THE WORLD OF JAPANESE SCI-FI COLLECTIBLES

by Jim Cironella

The theatrical release of TriStar's *Godzilla* has brought about the largest influx of new kaiju collectibles in Japan since the release of *Godzilla vs. Destroyer* in 1995. Here's a look at some of the more outstanding product releases from the past few months.

## Bandai's Godzilla Island Figure Series

The biggest news for collectors is the introduction of a 6" vinyl kaiju figure series from Bandai called *Godzilla Island*. Based upon previously-released figures, yet downsized from their original 8" scale, the line features twelve popular Toho monsters including Godzilla, MechaGodzilla, Mothra Larva, King Ghidorah, Gigan, Angilas, G-Force Mepos, Space Godzilla, King Serpax, Fire Rodan, Mecha King Ghidorah and Destroyer (first form). This product line has been based on the recent morning TV program, *Godzilla Island*, which began airing in Japan last September, although Bandai representatives report that the release of TriStar's *Godzilla* film was the primary factor for marketing the new figures (Editor's note: For more information and an in-depth review of the *Godzilla Island* line, see the product review on page 42 of this issue).

## Bandai Godzilla Candy Toy Series

The Godzilla candy toy arena has exploded in Japan with many new product releases, the first of which is *Gojira Chozenshu* (Godzilla Super Collection), a series of 1" super-deformed vinyl figures packed one per box with a mini-trading card for \$100. Released prior to the TriStar *Godzilla* film, the initial set featured Godzilla '54, Godzilla '62, Godzilla '64, the Heisei Godzilla, Destroyer, Space Godzilla, New MechaGodzilla, King Ghidorah, Aquas Mothra and Dagahra. A second set was released featuring the USA Godzilla (two versions), the USA Baby Godzilla, Fire Rodan and Mecha King Ghidorah. Unfortunately, the remaining figures were simply re-colored reissues from the first set, including an orange vinyl Heisei Godzilla being offered as "Burning Godzilla."

Other candy toy releases include an all-new set of 2" fully-painted figures with diorama bases called *Best of Godzilla*. Included in this set are Godzilla '54 vs. Mothra Larva, Godzilla '65 vs. King Ghidorah, Godzilla '64 vs. Rodan & Mothra Larva, Heisei Godzilla



アメリカンゴジラベビーゴジラ



ゴジラ+ラドン+モスラ対決



ゴジラ+モスラ対決

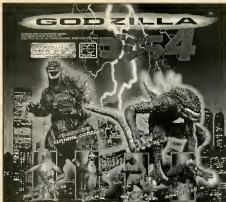


ゴジラ+スペースゴジラ



ゴジラ+キングギドラ





vs. Space Godzilla and a USA Godzilla with a USA Baby Godzilla, each retailing for \$399 per box. A nice touch to these small diorama sets is the addition of clear blue plastic heat rays and dorsal plates for the monsters.

Adding to the popular line of 4" PVC kyuja figures is Bandai's candy toy division has released over the years comes Hyper Godzilla (1 figure per box for \$399 each). While the majority of this eight-figure set are re-releases, there are some notable new additions to the

line such as Godzilla '82, Godzilla '84 and a USA Godzilla. Furthermore, the set's Heisei Godzilla figure is a previously-issued Burning Godzilla minus the printed-on heat effect.

Following Bandai's popular Godzilla Monster Museum candy toy figure set comes Godzilla Island, a set of twenty-six (1" figures with a monster island diorama base. These figures have been previously released in sets such as Hunt-up Godzilla and Godzilla Battle-Field, although the new set features the addi-

tion of Destroyer, Death Chiblers and USA Godzilla figures.

#### Bandai HG Capsule Toy Series

Without a doubt, the hottest of all the mini-figure collections in Japan is Bandai's High Grade (HG) capsule toy series. Previously-released sets featuring classic tokusatsu television heroes such as Kamen Rider, Robocon and Ultraman have now become eagerly sought after by collectors. Bandai continues to turn up the heat with the latest Godzilla series of 3" fully-painted Toho monster figures called HG Godzilla 4. This set includes Burning Godzilla, Godzilla '98 (USA), Angilas, Godzilla Junior, Gigan and Mechagodzilla '74. These capsules retail in Japan for \$399 each and are commonly available in vending machines at most toy and hobby shops. On deck to coincide with the theatrical release of *Mothra 2* is HG Godzilla 5, which will include Godzilla '89 (BioGaps), Rodan '96, Baragon, Gamera, Mothra '98 and new King Ghidorah. Stay tuned for a complete year-end update of Bandai's entire HG capsule toy line in the next issue of *Kyaku Fun*.

#### R.I.C. Godzilla & Toho Monster Figures

Also inspired by ToStar's "Year of Godzilla," a new line of 30cm Godzilla and classic Toho monster vinyl figures designed with the serious collector in mind are being planned by R.I.C. Company, Ltd. in association with X-Plus. The first of these limited edition "genuine toy" figures to be released is an excellent rendition of the original Godzilla 1954 prototype requette. This version is the first design sculpture for the 1954 film, which appeared in many publicity stills. The figure is limited to 3000 pieces, with 400 each of brown, green and blue painted versions being produced; 400 each of both brown vinyl and blue vinyl unpainted versions have also been released. Each figure comes with a serial-numbered plate, a wooden display plaque and a female "victim" for Godzilla to hold (as seen in several publicity photos). The figure retails for \$6,800 in Japan.

Next up from R.I.C. is a USA Godzilla 1998, an Abominable Snowman figure from the 1955 film, *Half-Human*, Anguirus from *Gogoros the Fire Monster*, an earlier prototype sculpture of Godzilla 1954 and Matango (a.k.a. *Attack of the Mushroom People*).

#### Medicom's Super Action Heroes

Medicom has released a 12" *Godzilla 1954* figure as part of their Super Action Heroes line. These figures feature articulated joints

Bandai candy toy maris is upon us! (Opposite page, left row, top to bottom): Hyper Godzilla series USA Godzilla, Godzilla '82 and Godzilla '84; (middle row, top to bottom): Hyper Godzilla series Godzilla '74, Best of Godzilla series Godzilla vs. Rodan & Mothra (Jarus) and Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla; (right row, top to bottom): Best of Godzilla series USA Godzilla with Baby Godzilla, Godzilla vs. Mothra (Jarus) and Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah. (Opposite page, bottom): Godzilla Island mini-figure set with diorama base. (This page, top): Vending machine display for HG Godzilla 4 capsule toy series; (above left & middle): Godzilla Super Collections sets 1 & 2; (above right): Yutaka's Platinum series USA Godzilla 5" vinyl figure.



Submitted for your approval from The Collectible Kaiju Zone (clockwise, from far left) Marmak's Real Action Heroes series *Godzilla* 1954, Marmak's Vinyl Paradise series *Satan*, *Rose*, *Pulgassari* and *Eblrah*, vinyl figures (bottom, from left to right) *Rurugen* and *Frankenstein* from *Frankenstein Conquers the World*, *Angilia* '55 and original style *King Ghidra*.

Joe-style bodies (similar to Hasbro's G.I. Joe) outfitted with costumes of popular Japanese sci-fi movie and television characters. A limited edition version of the *Godzilla* 1954 figure includes a realistic *Godzilla* "suit" and an authentically-styled *Combat Joe* figure with short and shorts, similar to the now tough-after collectible that was produced thirty years ago by Takara. The special version retails for \$11,900 and is limited to 5,000 pieces.

#### Marmak's Vinyl Paradise Series

Marmak shows no signs of slowing down as they continue to expand their Vinyl Paradise line of 10" vinyl kaiju figures. Adding several new entries to their Toho monster series, Marmak has issued a *Frankenstein* figure from *Frankenstein Conquers the World*, which marks the first time that this character has been released as a vinyl toy. Additionally, Marmak has also released an updated version of *Rurugen* that is more correctly proportioned to the *Frankenstein* figure than their earlier version. Also in release from Marmak as part of their Toho kaiju series is *Eblrah* from *Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster*, the 1955 version of *Angilia* from *Gigantis the Fire Monster*, *Megalon*, original style *King Ghidra* and *Gigan*. *Eblrah* has been released in both a standard red vinyl version and a "limited edition" green vinyl version.

Marmak has also released a figure of the North Korean kaiju, *Pulgassari*, to coincide with the film's first-run theatrical release in Japan. Black vinyl and red vinyl versions of the figure are available, as well as limited gold



versions of *Puigamari* and *Chibigamari* (the early doll-like form of the monster) that were offered at the Tokyo theater showing the film.

Marmat has also expanded their line of Giant Robo vinyl kago figures with the release of *Gorwar* (a.k.a. *Nucleon*), *Satan Rose* (a.k.a. *Gargoyle* Vine) and *Gargaw* (a.k.a. *Giant Claw*) for \$3,500 each. *Gargaw* has been issued in both red and blue vinyl versions.

Marmat's Vinyl Para Baby series of 5" kago figures from the *Ultra Q* series has also been expanded to the breaking point. The newest releases in this line include *Kanegon* & *Laragone*, *Ragna* & *Bullconga*, *Gorgon* & *Peter*, *Gora* & *Naragone* and *Iraon* & *Litter*. Each 2-figure set retails for \$3,500.

#### M-ichigo Kago Vinyl Series

M-ichigo (M-I) continues their kago vinyl line with the release of several new Toho kago figures. In addition to their standard six 8" figures, M-I has begun to issue replicas of vintage Bulmarik mini-size 4" vinyl figures. Since original images of these figures can easily command several hundred dollars apiece, these re-issues are an affordable alternative for the serious vinyl figure collector.

Currently in release are the *Shobijila*, the twin furies from *Atsuhara*—first reported by *Kappa-Fax* back in issue 65! Unlike most M-I vinyl figures, there is no color variation for these figures (the darker color issued usually represents a Moroccan version, while the brighter color issue represents a Bulmarik version). Instead, the two "mirror-image" figures come packaged together, with the addition of a pair of mini *Mothra larvae* for \$9000.

Also in release is *Magna*, the giant walrus from *Gorath*, packaged with a mini *Angilas* for \$4800. *Magna* is issued from the same mold as M-I's *Todaka* (*Lilwa* [2 walrus]) except that it is red vinyl with blue paint, while the latter figure is blue vinyl with silver paint. *Manda*, the giant sea snake from *Aragon*, has also been released for \$4800 in both blue and pink vinyl versions. A mini *Hidra* figure has been packaged with each version as well.

Next up from M-I is a 4-foot *Kanegon* vinyl figure, as well as a real type *Matango* vinyl figure to be issued in conjunction with the Toho video release of the same film.

#### Bee Model's All Yakai Collection

Bee Model has introduced a series of mini-vinyls from Daito's popular ghost film trilogy. A three-pack of 4" water spirit figures from *Fukus Densetsu*, as well as a 4" vinyl *Daimon* figure have been released—the perfect Halloween gift for the spooky-minded kago fan.

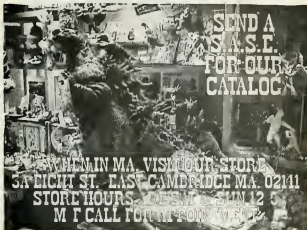


More collectible kago from Japan! (Top left) M-I's twin *Shobijila* vinyl dolls. (Top right) M-I's *Magna*, the giant walrus from *Gorath*. (middle) M-I's *Godzilla 1954* prototype vinyl figure, with display base and female figure (right) and in close-up detail (left). (Bottom, from left to right) Bee Model's All Yakai Collection featuring *Kappa*, *Umbreon*, *Umbreon* and *Daimon* from the Daito ghost movie, *Yokai Daisenshu*.



**CREATURE  
FEATURE  
PRODUCTIONS**

**MAILING ADDRESS  
P.O. BOX 410034  
CAMBRIDGE MA 02141  
TEL (617) 441-2599**



**SEND A  
SASE  
FOR OUR  
CATALOG**

**WHEN IN MA. VISIT OUR STORE  
37 NIGHT ST. EAST CAMBRIDGE MA. 02141  
STORE HOURS: MON-SAT 10-6 SUN 12-5  
M-F CALL FOR INFO (617) 441-2599**

**NEW BANDAI FIGURES  
(6 INCH SCALED DOWN  
VERSIONS)**

**MAY RELEASE  
GODZILLA 94  
MECHAGODZILLA  
MOTHRA LARVE  
KING GHIDORAH  
JUNE RELEASE  
G-FORCE MOGERA  
ANGILES  
GIGAN  
JULY RELEASE  
SPACEGODZILLA  
KING SEESAR  
FIRE RODAN**



**WWW.MACBETH.COM/CFP**



**CREATURE  
FEATURE  
PRODUCTIONS**

**MAILING ADDRESS  
P.O. BOX 410034  
CAMBRIDGE MA 02141  
TEL (617) 441-2599**



**CALL WITH WANTS**

**WHEN IN MA. VISIT OUR STORE  
3A EIGHT ST. EAST CAMBRIDGE MA. 02141  
STORE HOURS ARE SAT & SUN 12-5  
M-F CALL FOR APPOINTMENT**

**WWW.MACBETH.COM/CFP**



# G-CON '98

# PHOTO GALLERY

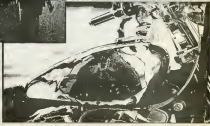
Over 650 kaiju fans packed the Radisson Hotel in Arlington Heights, IL, last May, making G-CON '98 the ultimate Japanese sci-fi convention of the year. We'll have full coverage in the next issue of *Kaiju-Fan*, but you can enjoy this 2-page photo gallery featuring highlights from the show right now!



(Above): G-CON organizer John Russo Roberto gives new convention security the thumbs up (in actuality, an amazing MechaGodzilla costume built by Paul Cavins).  
 (Below) Jay Johnson is electric as he leads the Southern Rock All-Stars' jam during the Saturday evening Costume Party.  
 (Below right & inset) Kaiju fan Mike Jaker traveled to G-CON '98 in style on his custom-painted G-motorcycle.



(Above) Celebrity guest Yoshio Tsuchiya enjoys his Q&A session with the fans as Yōsōhiko Shōbata (left) translates.  
 (Below) After 22 films, Godzilla has finally met his match!







(Above): Friday night at the movies with G-CON's special guests (from left) Shogun Kojima, Ken Saitama, Yoshio Tsuchiya, Haruo Nakajima, Carol Roberto, John Roberto and Jay Johnson. "I thought we were going to see [Lester] Weisman 4," snarls Saitama. (Above right): Cybertaur vs. JynGop during the G-CON (Cybertaur Control) play-a-suits created by Eric Yee and James Thompson. (Right): Conrade Smith takes a much-deserved break from the G-CON Online Internet team to hang out with girl, Ken Saitama. (Below): At the awesome Creature Feature Productions display in the dealer's room, Brian Madson sez, "What do you mean 'No bidding tables' isn't free?"



(Below Left): Could this be the infamous G-Mafia? (Below): Dennis Lancaster posing with his incredible Mother Lorna suit during the Costume Contest, as MishaGoddella stands guard in the background.



# ULTRAMAN-IA SWEEPS JAPAN!



## A VISIT TO THE FESTIVAL OF THE ULTIMATE HERO

by John Rocco Roberts  
and Jim Cirresella

With the release of recent Ultraman television series, movies and original videos, there's no doubt that Japan is currently being swept up in a wave of Ultra-mania. As such, there has been an abundance of Ultraman-related festivals and attractions throughout Japan in the last two years. Although primarily geared towards children, these family-oriented events are a great way to further enjoy your favorite giant hero for those lucky enough to attend.

The primary focus of these festivals and attractions is the exhibit area featuring Ultra character displays from the various TV series and films. Dramatic "battle scenes" are constructed using full-size Ultra heroes and monsters (some of which move with the aid of electronics) and are highlighted with lighting, smoke and sound effects to create the

proper atmosphere. Quite often, there will be also be at least one exhibit featuring a giant-size hero or monster that never fails to inspire awe from the attendees. As an added bonus, the dramatic displays sometimes feature actual props or costumes from recent television series. When it isn't possible for these items to be displayed in an exhibit, you will often find display cases full of authentic props, Ultra kyuju masks, scripts and design sketches. For US fans, the opportunity to view actual props from the various Ultra programs is rare, yet in Japan it is often taken for granted at these events.

In keeping with a children-oriented theme, the festivals often feature games and activities for the kids. One such example would be a "pitch and toss" game where the attendees are challenged to throw a small ball at targets mounted on full-size figures of Baltan and Twin Tail and other Ultra monsters. Upon hitting the target, each monster will move and respond with characteristic sound effects.

Another prominent staple of these events is the live performance, depending on the venue where the festival is being held, these stage shows can be quite elaborate, featuring your favorite heroes and monsters in a live play, coordinated to pre-recorded voices and sound effects. These performances feature excellent stunts and choreographed



An enormous Z-Two alien display waits for the spectators to arrive. Photo by John Rocco Roberts

battles, while also providing a message for the children, such as the importance of the Ultra brothers working together as team.

Of course, no Ultraman festival would be complete without a goods shop in which to buy every conceivable product the Ultra enthusiast could ever want. From children to adults of all ages, the Ultra festivals have something to appeal to the child-like wonder that lives in each and every Ultra fan.



A giant Ultraman Tiga guards the entrance to the Ultra Hero exhibit at a Tokyo amusement park. Photo by John Rocco Roberts

(Top photo) A gallery of Ultra heroes at the 1998 Ultraman Festival in Tokyo Dome.

Photo by Jim Cirresella

## ULTRA MEGA FIGHT at Hirakata Park in Osaka

by Larry Wanchop

For those of you who are unaware of it, Japan is an extremely consumer-based society. For every new monster film, Super Sentai television series or original video animation (OVA) that is released, there is the inevitable flood of toys, model kits, vending machine prizes, CDs, phone cards, etc. to boost the popularity of the show in question. In fact, the shows boost the sale of the merchandise in a sort of symbiotic relationship. It has even been said that new series of Ultraman, Kamen Rider or Power Rangers are created each year simply to bring out a whole new line of products! (This is the most likely reason why the Japanese rarely see a second season of the same TV show, no matter how popular it is.)

A frequent offshoot of these upcoming movies and TV programs is a temporary festival or exhibit created to promote the characters related to the new release. Sometimes these are traveling exhibits, and other times they are connected to just one theme park. I attended one such event on March 28, 1994.

From March 13 to June 21, 1993, Hirakata Park, a large

amusement theme park in Osaka, was host to one such festival called Ultraman Mega Fight. This coincided with the release of the new movie, *Ultraman Tiga & Ultraman Dyna*, released on March 14. An impressive set-up, the first thing that you see upon reaching the exhibit area are big statues of the two newest Ultra heroes,



Some of the scenes featured included Ultraman Great vs. Koolha, Ultraman Jack vs. Bomster and Ultraseven vs. Elekking. The figures either moved, shot water or light or just stood there, looking menacing; an occasional monster or spaceship would circle overhead on a wire every so often.

The biggest and most impressive diorama was devoted to the new movie. On one side of the room, there was a large playset with Tiga and Dyna in their famous battle poses. On the opposite side of the walkway for exhibit guests stood the huge monster, Queen Messor. An especially cool

touch was a big laser light that would shoot between the two heroes and over the heads of the spectators to "blast" the alien monster.

The last diorama room held the hall of the Ultra heroes, in which a statue of every Ultraman (or woman) was gathered. The final room of the exhibit was a prop display with original costumes, guns, helmets, scripts and a few monster bats.

Tiga and Dyna. Just inside the nearby entrance is the first of the props, a Super GUTS one used in both the new film and the *Ultraman Dyna* television show.

Continuing inward, you enter a darkened "secret room" where you are warned by a recorded voice of a villainous new threat to Earth.

There are some lighted statues of old Ultra legends, and then you are prompted into the next darkened room by a projected image of the new villain. From there you go into more after rooms of life-size (well, human-size) dioramas of battles between various Ultra heroes and their more famous foes, complete with sound effects, laser-beams and strobe lights.



(Top right): The GUTS Machine De La Mu from Ultraman Tiga, on display at the Ultraman Mega Fight. (Middle): Ultraman Great challenges the new beast Koolha in an eerie display. (Left): Larry Wanchop and friend relax before the towering Queen Messor. (Above) Dyna and Tiga team-up against a new foe. Photos by Norman England

Of course, the end of the exhibit featured a huge merchandise hall full of every conceivable Ultra item known to man. Loads of Bandai figures, model kits, bins full of vinyl figure puppets, stuffed Ultra characters of every size, towels, books, candy, etc. were on sale—even an Ultraman-shaped coin banger and toilet paper holder! There were also vending machines shaped like monsters

in *Don Quijote*—*don't* *miss* that!—the next activity was the opportunity to make your own personalized souvenir. For ¥1,500 (about \$12 at that time), you could have your photo taken between two Ultra hero mannequins and then have that photo converted into a real, working Japanese phone card, a

unique one-of-a-kind souvenir!

At the start of the exhibit, you were able to buy a nice program book about the festival, at the end, you could then stamp your bag, round ink stamps was the book, which is another souvenir-type activity that is *soooooo* *don't* *miss* Japan. All in all, it was a great exhibit that had lots to see, lots to buy and was fun to attend.

(Right): Our heroes are ready for action! Photo by Norman England



A puppet display from the Ultra P Information Bureau.

Photo by Jim Cervante



Test your skill and hit the Ultra target! Photo by Jim Cervante



(Left): An incredible display of masks, puppets and design artwork from the Ultraman Tiga series, including masks for the monsters Rep-Zon (foreground) & Gorta (far right). (Right): Hundreds of fans attend a live Ultra show at a Tokyo amusement park. Photo by Jim Cervante



Fresh from appearing in the Ultraman Tiga & Ultraman Dyna movie, the space monster Gorgos waves the visitors at the 1995 Ultraman Festival in Tokyo (in reality, an impressive ballu costume built by V-Shop of Japan). Photo by Jim Cervante

# Ultraman™

## Special 30th anniversary collection volume 1

Expressions In Animation, Inc. is proud to announce the release of *Ultraman™* — the *Special 30th Anniversary Collection* on home video.

*Ultraman* was created in 1966 by Eiji Tsuburaya, the co-creator of *Godzilla™*. In his day, Mr. Tsuburaya was known worldwide as the "God of Special Effects."

## As a bonus volume one also includes:

- ☐ An alternate English language opening sequence produced but never broadcast!
- ☐ Original Japanese opening credit sequence with English subtitles!
- ☐ An interview with Haruo Nakajima who portrayed *Godzilla* in the first thirteen G films as well as several classic *Ultraman* monsters such as *Neonga* from episode three!
- ☐ And more!

Flies  
again



on home  
video!

Make checks and money  
orders payable to:  
Expressions In Animation,  
Inc.

Volume one includes episodes 1 through 4 complete and uncut with the original English language sound track and opening credit sequence! All episodes have been re-mastered from the original 16 mm film prints for the best possible quality!

Send orders to:

Ultraman volume 1  
Expressions In Animation, Inc.  
P O Box 10  
Dayton, OH 45406



Please send me \_\_\_\_ copies of *Ultraman™ Special 30th Anniversary Collection* volume 1 at \$24.95 each. Add \$3.00 for priority postage and handling plus \$1 per additional tape. Ohio customers please add 6.5% sales tax (\$1.62) per tape.

Send my order to: NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# KAIJU BYTES

## The Guide To Japanese Sci-Fi Resources On The World Wide Web

by Aaron J. Smith

### G-CON '98 ONLINE!

<http://monsterzero.org/gcon98>

Without a doubt, this year's G-CON was very successful. Everyone who attended had a great time meeting and sharing thoughts about their favorite movies and actors with other Japanese sci-fi fans. And yet, this year's G-CON went beyond the physical boundaries of the convention itself and for the first time ventured into cyberspace. G-CON '98 not only marked the first time that a Japanese sci-fi fantasy convention had an online virtual counterpart, but the event was also connected via the Internet to a European gathering of Godzilla fans in the Netherlands called EURO G-CON '98, making it the first truly international science fiction convention. Organized by Saiko Gensō, creator of the Godzilla website, Goji-World, EURO G-CON '98 was an important part of the online activities at G-CON '98 ONLINE! Although initially conceived separately from one another, the combination of both events was a superb idea that ultimately helped to bring worldwide fans closer together.

While I had the initial idea of G-CON '98 ONLINE!, there were many others involved in the implementation and design of the convention's website. These folks gave 100% of their time and deserve equal credit in bringing this historic feat in kaiju fandom to life. I would like to take a moment and first thank the people without whom G-CON ONLINE! would not have been possible:

- Gertrude Smith, creator of the Internet's largest Japanese sci-fi website directory, Kaiju-DIRECT! (<http://www.2.arkansas.net/>

- gsraptor/godzilla.html)

- Saiko Gensō, creator of the world's best G-site, Goji-World (<http://www.intelco.com/goji-world/>)

- Jim Cirronella of the online Japanese toy store, Club Daikaiju (<http://www.daikaiju.com>)

Of course, I must also thank John Roberto, G-CON's organizer, for giving us free reign as the official convention website and for staging the show in the first place! All these folks worked very hard to make this event a reality and produce a great Internet alternative for those who could not attend the convention itself.

To spread the word about our online convention, we used as many Internet resources as possible including the monster newsgroup, alt.movies.monster, the Japanese Monster Movie List, Sony's own official Godzilla movie website and placement of banners on our own genre-related sites.

### ACTIVITIES

Much of the weekend was spent by Gertrude (who brought her own computer to the convention) manning the G-CON '98 ONLINE! room at the hotel-in-Chicago. It was here that G-CON attendees could gather and engage in real-time discussions with other fans on the Internet using the Goji-World chat room, leave messages on the Goji-World mes-

sage board and just cruise around the Net looking for Godzilla-based websites. Many fans still don't realize the benefits of the Internet and the G-CON ONLINE! room helped to raise their awareness. It

was also used to keep the children of the adult fans attending G-CON busy, as several webchats for the kids during convention hours were arranged by Gertrude and Saiko.

In addition, Gertrude, Jim and Saiko would e-mail me digital photos of the daily activities at the respective events. I would then edit and place them online as quickly as possible, so as to show G-CON ONLINE! visitors what was going on at the convention as it was happening. Pictures of G-CON's costume contest, model contest, celebrity Q&A sessions and fans mingling, as well as photos sent from EURO G-CON are among those that are now online.

While a good part of the convention website was dedicated to posting news and photos from the convention as it happened, there



Hiroyuki Nakayama and Ken Sakuma chat with kaiju fans around the world via the Internet from their Chicago hotel room at G-CON '98.

were some activities that were exclusively available to people visiting the online convention site:

## SCI-FI CHANNEL WEB CHAT

G-CON '98 ONLINE! kicked off its activities with a special Internet webchat with G-CON guests Haruo Nakajima and Kenpochiro Satsuma on the Sci-Fi Channel website, The Dominion (<http://www.scifi.com>). This was first ever Internet chat with celebrities from the Japanese sci-fi genre and it was the one part of the online activities that meant the most to me. Being that I could not make it to this year's convention due to personal illness, I still wanted to contribute in some way to the convention itself and I decided to contact the Sci-Fi Channel about doing the chat. I expressed the importance of these two men to Godzilla fandom and the Sci-Fi Channel jumped at the chance to feature them in an online discussion. After some wrangling to secure a computer for use during the night of the chat (provided by Jim), a direct Internet connection from the hotel (provided by Mark Gibbs of Flash Net (<http://www.flash.net>), and an interpreter for the guests (Yoshihiko Shibata), the equipment was tested and all was set to go live with the Men Who Were Godzilla!

Despite my worrying and some little problems along the way, the webchat was great! There was a good turnout for the chat and everyone enjoyed talking to and asking questions of the men who embodied their favorite monster. Best of all, both Mr. Nakajima and Mr. Satsuma enjoyed their time online, this was something they had never done before and they were more than happy to take part in this historical event. A full transcript of the one-hour chat can be viewed at G-CON '98 ONLINE!, as well as on the Sci-Fi Channel website.

## ONLINE CONTEST

To spark interest and to get people to return to the website often, we decided to have an online contest with prizes for visitors. All

they had to do was register their name, e-mail address and home address with the website, names were then drawn and prizes were awarded during each day of the convention. The contest was a complete success, as over 100 people signed up for the giveaways.

All the prizes for the contest were donated by sponsors in exchange for mention and a link from G-CON '98 ONLINE! to their respective websites. The companies that donated prizes included: Daikaya Enterprises & Productions (<http://home.earthlink.net/~castle/GC1.html>) which donated two Kaija-Fan subscriptions, Club Daikaya, which donated toys and Godzilla videos, Collector's Edge (<http://www.concentric.net/~advan731/INTRO.HTM>) which donated toys, and Cinescape (<http://www.cinescape.com>), a major sci-fi movie magazine which donated a one-year subscription.

While everything didn't run perfectly, G-CON '98 ONLINE! was a great success as it gave those who weren't able to attend the convention the opportunity to take part in the event and see what all the fuss regarding the world's greatest Japanese sci-fi fan convention was about. You, too, can get in on all the fun by visiting us at <http://monsterzero.org/gcon98>. Until then, here's to next year!

## KAIJU ON THE WEB

Aaron Smith's Godzilla News at <http://www.monsterzero.org> is one of the Internet's best websites dedicated to reporting the latest information on all areas of Japanese monster films. Visit Godzilla News and be sure to sign up for the Japanese Monster Mailing List Plus. Aaron has now expanded the scope of his website with the addition of HENSHU ONLINE!, a Japanese sci-fi website by Marikabe co-creators August Ragone and Bob Johnson. Check it out at <http://www.monsterzero.org/henshu> and tell 'em that Kaija-Fan sent you!

And speaking of online websites devoted to Japanese live-action science fiction, direct from the pages of Creepsville magazine comes Black Sun by Roy Way and Fred Kratz at <http://trekbase.com/creepsville/blacksun.html>. Here you will find news and reviews from the world of Japanese sci-fi, as well as episode guides for classic television shows such as *Kamen Rider* and *Alphain Kun*. Check it out now!

Continued from page 13

*should be told to know that their paying customers are not going to support future products that lack integrity as well. Thanks for your continued support. -Ann Cironella*

Dear KAIJA-FAN

I recently got a hold of a copy of *KAIJA-FAN* #7 and 18. As much as I loved the issues, I'm disappointed at the lack of coverage on other Japanese sci-fi TV shows and movies. It seems the magazine is just focusing on the Big G more than usually. Don't get me wrong—I'm a Godzilla fan, but I think there are over one hundred other tokusatsu TV shows and movies that you could be covering as well. Godzilla's only been in 22 films (not counting the bastardization from Triforce) and a few episodes of *Zone Fighter*. It's like an entire magazine just focusing on *Dragonball*. Personally, I wouldn't mind seeing more of *Ultraman* and *Kamen Rider*.

I hope that you continue G-coverage, but not to the extent where it takes up a whole issue. I know that it must be hard work trying to please ALL Japanese sci-fi fans.

If you have Ishimori Productions address, could you please print it?

James Kibane  
Cleveland, OH

*James, I know where you're coming from in wanting to see more coverage of other areas of Japanese sci-fi than just Godzilla. That's the very reason why Kaija-Fan (originally called Ultra-Fan) was created in the first place to report on areas of the genre that focuses like G-Fan were not covering.*

*However, are you sure that you're not confusing our "Toho in America" series for Godzilla coverage? In actuality, we haven't covered a Godzilla film in "Toho in America" since issue #6 and the next film in that series, King Kong vs. Godzilla, isn't scheduled until issue #11. In fact, a majority of the films covered in that ongoing feature since it began back in issue #5 have been the lesser-known Toho genre classics like Half Human, Battle in Outer Space and The Secret of the Telegian.*

*Additionally, outside of our regular Triforce Godzilla coverage (which has been wrapped up with this issue since the film has been released), we've not had a Godzilla article in Kaija-Fan since issue #5! Keep in mind that it is very difficult to find fans who are knowledgeable enough to contribute articles on the more obscure areas of the Japanese sci-fi genre, still, that it is an area that we are increasingly working to improve with each issue. I think you'll be pleased with our Kamen Rider feature in this issue, as well as our extended Ultra series coverage in our upcoming special issue this fall. Thanks for reading! -JRR*

ISS. Shin is witness to the prototype cyborg soldiers, identical to himself, being killed by the CIA. He now seeks for his safety, as well for his girlfriend, Ai Aruka, to whom he makes love, she subsequently becomes pregnant with Shin's Rider baby. Shin faces his would-be mission, who turns out to be an earlier version cyborg soldier named Amu Goo. Unlike Shin, Amu Goo is more skeleton-like (shades of *The Terminator*) and armed with a destructive claw. Shin rips off the renegade cyborg's head after an intense battle. Ai is ultimately killed before we can see the result of the Rider baby's birth. The film ends with Shin, now alone, carrying Ai's body into



Silver Kamen Rider

the sewer, with the obvious possibility of his return in a future tele-series.

Fortunately, this new addition to the Rider series didn't continue, as it is sorely lacking in action—what the Kamen Rider series are most famous for. A major high point of the movie is the character designs by Kenta Aramaya, best known for his character designs in *Zennan*, *Ataru Naga* and in *Super Sentai* shows like *Jurassic*.

### Kamen Rider ZO (1993)

In 1993, Toei introduced the first of their theatrical entries called Toei's Super Hero Fair. 1993's *Super Hero Fair* included three features: *Gouki Sentai Dai Ranger* (*Five Star Task Force*), *Tokusai Robo Janshen* (*Special Search Robot Janshen*), and *Kamen Rider ZO* (pronounced *Zozo*). This story involves Masaru Aono (played by Ko Doman), who is involved in an experiment by Dr. Machuzaki which unwillingly turns him into a grasshopper-cyborg. After escaping and secluding himself in a cave, he finally awakens to find that he is somehow connected to the doctor's son, Harushi.

Masaru finds that Harushi is being pursued by Dr. Machuzaki's later experiment, an organically-spawned neo-lifeform called Doron. Doron is a scientific creation gone haywire and now has ideas of its own. Masaru,



Harushi and Doron are all connected as brothers since all were created by Dr. Machuzaki in one way or another. Doron is also able to create its own children, in this case the monstrous Kamen-Onoko (Bat Man) and Kamen-Drona (Spider Woman), both of whom ZO easily defeats. On his motorcycle, the Z-Bringer, ZO tracks down Harushi after the child is kidnapped by Kamen-Onoko. He confronts Doron in an amazingly well-choreographed battle scene. ZO is even absorbed by Doron, but of course, escapes and gives him the wheel of this excellent entry.

Like *Kamen Rider Black*, *Kamen Rider ZO* was geared for the hardcore Rider fan, a 48-minute featurette full of horror, drama, and non-stop action. Once again, director Kenta Aramaya was behind the wheel of this excellent entry.

### Kamen Rider J (1994)

1994's *Super Hero Fair* brought us the latest installment of our cyborg hero, *Kamen Rider J*. This 48-minute film was accompanied with two other features as well: *Ninja Sentai Kakuranger* (*Ninja Task Force Hidden Ranger*) and *Blaze Saver*. The story begins with a photographer, Koji Segawa (played by Yuta Mochizuki), and his young friend, Kana, who are out camping when they are visited by the demonic space army, Fogg. Fogg kidnaps Kana and throws Koji off a cliff. Koji is rescued by what are referred to as earth-bound aliens. The aliens recognize this new threat and give Koji what they call "J Power." With this power, Koji is able to become the kaiser soldier, Kamen Rider J (the J representing *Justice*, *Justice* and *Judge*). He also recovers

the help of a resilient grasshopper, Ben, and a motorcycle called the J-Crosser. J battles off the three Fogg generals, Gero (robberman), Agito (thiefman), and Zu (wasp woman) before he fights the head honcho, the Fogg Mother. The most unique aspect about the final battle is that Fogg Mother is a giant, living battle-former on wheels and J must become jumbo-sized in order to defeat the destructive menace. J performs the Rider Kick on a much larger scale and blows the Fogg Mother to kingdom come, thus saving Kana and the earth.



This movie is geared towards a younger crowd, unlike *Kamen Rider ZO* before it. Once again, Kenta Aramaya was at the helm as director. I was one of the first Riders to become giant-sized, thanks to a video that came out a year earlier called *Kamen Rider vs. Ultraman*, in which a special segment featured a team-up of the two original incarnations of our heroes. In this segment, the original Kamen Rider becomes super-sized to aid Ultraman in battle against the giant monster, Saucer-Godzilla, which is the combined mutation of a Rider villain and Ultra monster.

Since *Kamen Rider J* was released four years ago, there has yet to be a new Kamen Rider production (although rumors persist on the Internet of a future character called *Kamen Rider Neo*). That whether or not a new series or movie is produced, there is already an extensive legacy of programs that have established Kamen Rider as one of the most cutting-edge characters in the genre of Japanese science fiction. I hope that this brief history will encourage you to discover more about the world of Kamen Rider for yourself.



# ***SHOWCASE SAYS...***



**When it  
Comes  
to  
Rare...**

**We wrote the book. Literally.**

**Not only does Showcase consistently stock the rarest and best in Godzilla collectibles, but we are pleased to announce the publication of the first english language Godzilla Price Guide !**



## ***SHOWCASE COLLECTIBLES***

**4470 Chamblee Dunwoody Rd., Suite 45, Atlanta, GA 30338**

**Phone: (770) 458-3356 Fax: (770) 458-3217**

**E-mail: [Showcase@onramp.net](mailto:Showcase@onramp.net)**

# THE G-STORE

*Bringing the Best Of Japanese Science Fiction Fantasy to America, and the World!*

Daijapa Enterprises and Productions  
832 East 14th Street - Suite 4G  
Brooklyn, NY 11230  
(718) 253-8649  
Fax: (718) 253-2102

Sold to:

Ship to: (if different address):

Make Check or Money Order Payable to: DAIJAPA PRODUCTIONS

QTY.	DESCRIPTION	PRICE EACH	TOTAL
	Subscription to <b>KAMU-FAN</b> Magazine (One year, four issues)	\$18.00	
	<b>KAMU-FAN #7</b> Featuring: The DeMystifying of Gamera, Toho in America 3: Gakko Story Corner, Collectable Kaiju and Kaiju Bytes (ONLY 10 COPIES AVAILABLE)	\$19.00	
	<b>KAMU-FAN #6</b> Featuring: Toho in America 2: Heavy Armored Beetle Fighter, Collectable Kaiju and Kaiju Bytes	\$5.00	
	<b>KAMU-FAN #5</b> Featuring: Godzilla and the Second World War, Toho in America 1: Giant Robot Episode Guide and Collectable Kaiju 1	\$6.00	
	<b>Special Autographed KAMU-FAN #5</b> Signed by Hideo Nakajima and Ken Sakuma (Limited to 25 issues)	\$25.00	
	<b>Special Autographed KAMU-FAN #7</b> Signed by Hideo Nakajima, Ken Sakuma and Yoshio Tsuchiya (Limited to 25 issues)	\$25.00	
	<b>Special Autographed G-CORE™ Program Book</b> Signed by Ken Sakuma, Hideo Nakajima, Kenpachiro Sakuma, Masaru Mihai and Dore Kraus (Limited to 25 issues)	\$25.00	
	<b>Age Of The Gods: A History of the Japanese Fantasy Film</b> by Guy Minner Tucker 1996 Softbound, 268 pgs	\$23.45	
	<b>"I Brake for Giant Mutant Dinosaurs" Bumper Sticker</b>	\$2.00	
	<b>G-CORE PHOTO GALLERY</b> Autographed photo's available: Kenji Sakuma, Hideo Nakajima, Kenpachiro Sakuma, Yoshio Tsuchiya, Masaru Mihai and Dore Kraus. Please indicate which photo(s) you want.	\$19.00 All six for \$56.00	
SUBTOTAL			
LOCAL SALES TAX			
SHIPPING & HANDLING			INCLUDED
TOTAL DUE			

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR ORDER!**

Prices good until 12/31/98 - This Page May Be Photocopied



